ROILUS AND CRESSIDA

AND

HE CANTERBURY TALES

BY GEOFFREY CHAUCER

TH MODERN ENGLISH VERSIONS OF BOTH WORKS



WILLIAM BENTON *Publisher*

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O LONDON TORONTO GENEVA SYDNEY TOKYO

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Geoffrey Chaucer, c 1340–1400

Chaucer was born when Edward III was achiev ing his first victories in the Hundred Years' War against France The history of the Chaucer family to some extent mirrors the rise of the burgher class during these years His father and grandfather were prosperous wine-merchants who had obtained some standing at court and were beginning to engage in public service The poet for most of his life held government offices, and Thomas Chaucer, who was almost certainly the poet's son, rose to wealth and influence in the fifteenth century

The extant records of Chaucer's life show that he was a busy and versatile man of affairs, but they disclose almost nothing of his personal life or of his literary career Even the exact date of his birth is a matter of conjecture From evi dence he gave in a law suit in 1386 it is known that he was then 'forty years old and more and had borne arms for twenty seven years' From an early age he evidently had intimate knowl edge of the court, he served successively in the households of Lionel Duke of Clarence, Ed ward III, and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lan caster In 1359 he was a member of Lionel s di vision in the largest army which Edward III had so far led into France Chaucer was taken prisoner and ransomed by the King The fol lowing year he seems to have acted as diplo matic courier in the negotiations resulting in the Peace of Calais He may then have been chosen to receive special training for govern [illegible]

[illegible] traced their descent Chaucer had already be gun to win some reputation as a poet and on the death of Gaunt s first wife in 1369 he wrote, supposedly at the Duke s request, the *Book of the Duchess* in which he shows an inti mate knowledge of the French court poetry

During the first ten years of his service as a King s esquire Chaucer was frequently em ployed for diplomatic missions to the continent, "on the King s secret affairs" He went several times to France and the Low Countries, but per haps the most important for his literary develop ment were the two missions that he made to Italy in 1372 and 1378 The first of these took him to Genoa on a commercial assignment, but he also visited Florence and was there when [illegible] Petrarch had lived and worked the last twenty years of his life

Even before his second Italian mission Chau cer had begun to receive offices at home In 1374 he had been appointed Comptroller of Customs and Subsidy of Wools, Skins and Hides That same year he obtained rent free the house above the city gate of Aldgate and was awarded by the King a daily pitcher of wine A few years later he was also given charge of the customs on wines In his position in the Custom House which he held for almost twelve years Chaucer came into close association with the great merchants who were then beginning to come into prominence and seems to have been particularly intimate with the merchants who actually controlled the city government of London Yet there is little indication that he [illegible] yet he also continued to receive favors from Henry IV after Richard s deposition

The twelve years passed in the tower above Aldgate were among the most productive for Chaucer as a writer Besides the two court po ems, the *House of Fame* and the *Parliament of Fowls*, Chaucer, as the result of his Italian jour neys and reading of Boccaccio and Petrarch, was inspired to work upon "the storye of Pala mon and Arcyte' and the *Troilus and Cressida* The dedication of the *Troilus* to "moral Gow er" and philosophical Strode disclose some thing of his intellectual friendships He seems to have been rather intimate with Gower, for that poet acted as his deputy at the Custom

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

BOOK I

1

THE double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his [illegible]

2

To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne,
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere

3

For I [illegible]

4

But ye loveres, that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow [illegible]

5

And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus [illegible]

6

And biddeth eek for [illegible]

1

THE double sorrow of Troilus to tell,
Unhappy son of Priam, king of Troy,
And how he fared, when first in love he fell,
From woe to weal, then back again from joy,
Until we part my time I shall employ
Tisiphone, now help me to endite
These woful lines, that weep e'en as I write!

2

On thee I call Godd[illegible]

[illegible] man should have a gloomy mate,
And faces sad, those who sad tales relate.

3

For I to serve Love's servants ever try,
Yet dare not seek, for my unlikeliness,
The aid of Love, although for love I die,
So far am I from prospect of success
But yet if this may make the sorrows less
Of any lover, or may his cause avail,
The thanks be his and mine this toilsome tale.

4

But O ye lovers [illegible]

And pray for those that dwell in love's despair,
From [illegible]

7

And pray for lovers all who are at ease,
That they may still continue to be so,
And pray that they their ladies still may please
And unto Love a reverent honor show,

With pity and compassion in my heart,
As though I brother were to lovers all
Now take, I pray, my story in good part,
Henceforth I shall endeavor to recall
What sorrows once on Troilus must fall
In loving Cressida, who first returned
His love, but for new love this old love spurned

9

Well known the story, how the Greeks so strong
In arms, went with a thousand vessels sailing
To Troy, and there the Trojan city long

10

Now so it chanced that in the Trojan town,
There dwelt a lord of rank and high degree,

11

When Calchas found his priestly computation
Confirmed the oracle Apollo spake,

12

13

And every Trojan, both the young and old,
Declared that Calchas, with his wicked kin,
Deserved to burn alive for this great sin

14

7

And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
That god hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
And sende hem might hir ladies so to plese,
That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.

8

And for to have of hem compassioun
As though I were hir owene brother dere.
Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
And how that she forsook him er she deyde.

9

It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troye-wardes, and the citee longe
Assegeden neigh ten yeer er they stente,
And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
The ravisshing to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne

10

Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he
Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answere of his god, that highte thus,
Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus

11

So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
And eek by answere of this Appollo,
That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe,
Thorugh which that Troye moste been for-do,
He caste anoon out of the toun to go,
For wel wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde
Destroyed been, ye, wolde who-so nolde

12

For which, for to departen softely
Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
And to the Grekes ost ful prively
He stal anoon; and they, in curteys wyse,
Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
In every peril which that is to drede.

13

The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed,
Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
With hem of Grece, and casten to ben wroken
On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken,
And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
Ben worthy for to brennen, fel and bones

14

Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
Al unwist of this false and wikked dede,
His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
As she that niste what was best to rede,

For bothe a widowe was she, and allone
Of any freend, to whom she dorste hir mone.

15

Criseyde was this lady name a-right,
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.

16

This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun,
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.

17

Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,
And that she was so fair a creature,
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anoon,
And seyde, "lat your fadres treson goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self, in joye,
Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.

18

And al th'onour that men may doon yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
[illegible]

19

And in hir hous she abood with swich meynee
As to hir honour nede was to holde,
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it nought, therfore I lete it goon

20

[illegible]
The folk of Troye, and thus fortune onlofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe

21

But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle,
For it were here a long digressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte,
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.

22

But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,

For she a widow was without a friend
Who might bear aid and helpful counsel lend.

15

Cressida was the name this lady bore,
[illegible]

And sent down here in scorn of our poor earth.

16

[illegible]
Before great Hector, where she doth proclaim
Her loyalty with tearful voice and eye,
And pleads for grace and treason doth deny.

17

Now Hector was a man of kindly heart,
And when he saw how great was her distress,
And then her beauty likewise played a part,
These words of comfort to her did address
"About your father's wicked deeds, the less
That's said the better! But you yourself in joy
Dwell here with us the while you will in Troy!

18

[illegible]
And took her leave and to her home retired

19

And there she dwelt with such a retinue
As fitting was for one of her high station,
And kept good house, as she was wont to do,
Enjoying love and honest reputation
As much as any in the Trojan nation;
But if she children had, I do not know,
I have not heard, and therefore let it go.

20

[illegible]
And now her wheel goes up, and now goes down,
And now she wears a smile and now a frown

21

[illegible]

22

Now though the Greeks the Trojan city hold,
Emprisoned by a siege set all around,

The Trojans still observe their customs old
Honoring their gods with worshipping profound,
And of their relics one the most renowned
Was called Palladion, to which they prayed
In trust of heaven's protection and of aid

23

And so it chanced when April heralds Spring

24

And to the temple in their very best
The common folk came in from left and right,
And to Palladion themselves addressed
And there came also many a lusty knight,
Many a lady fair and maiden bright
All well arrayed from greatest unto least,
In honor of the season and the feast

25

And all folk gazed at her in glad surprise,
To see in her how fair the fairest are
And under inky cloud so bright a star

26

As was fair Cressida so brightly shone
Her beauty there beneath her widow's weeds,
And yet she stood apart and all alone

27

Now Troilus, the leader of a band
Of youthful knights, went with them up and down
In this great temple where on every hand
They eyed the beauties of the Trojan town,
For Troilus prized neither smile nor frown
Of one particular and fancy free
He praised or criticized impartially

28

And as he roamed about he kept an eye
On all the members of his retinue
And if some knight or squire heaved a sigh
Or longing glances towards some maiden threw
Then he would smile and make a great ado
And twit him thus, "God knows she sleepeth
  blithe
For all of thee though thou shalt twist and writhe!

29

"The fashion of you lovers I have heard
And heard of all your foolish gaits and ways,
And what great toils to win love are incurred
In keeping it what dangers and delays,
For when your prey is lost come woeful days!
What fools ye be and in your folly blind,
Who can no lesson in each other find."

Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute,
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
They hadde a relik hight Palladion,
That was hir trist a-boven everichon

23

And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme,
And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
In sondry wyses shewed, as I rede,
The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
Palladiones feste for to holde

24

And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
In general, ther wente many a wight,
To herknen of Palladion the servyse,
And namely, so many a lusty knight,
So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
Ful wel arayed, bothe moste and leste,
Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste

25

Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
In widewes habite blak, but nathelees,
Right as our firste lettre is now an A,

26

As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
That hir biheldcn in hir blake wede,
And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,
And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
Simple of a tyr, and debonaire of chere,
With ful assured loking and manere

27

This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
In thilke large temple on every syde,
Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
Now here, now there, for no devocioun
Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste

28

And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten
If knight or squyer of his companye
Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten
On any woman that he coude aspye,
He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus, "god wot, she slepeth
  softe
For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!

29

"I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
Ye lovers and your lewede observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in winninge
Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces,
And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunce!
O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye,
Ther nis not oon can war by other be"

30

And with that word he gan cast up the browe,
Ascaunces, "lo! is this nought wysly spoken?"

And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.

31

O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al th'effect contraire
Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al-day fayleth thing that foles wenden.

32

I moot endure, and with my feres drawe."

33

So ferde it by this fers and proude knight,
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende no-thing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wex a-fere,
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget un to love

34

For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle,
For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde,
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde

35

And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree,
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.

36

And trewelich it sit wel to be so,
For alderwysest han ther-with ben plesed,
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han been conforted most and esed,
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.

37

Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,

30

31

The proud and humble both are caught unwary,
For Troilus, who now mounts up so airy,
Hath little thought of afterward descending,
But folly oft hath unexpected ending

32

For horses made, I still must pull and draw

33

So fared it with this rash and hardy knight,
Who was a king's son of most high degree,

34

And now I bid you profit by this man,
Ye worthy folk, and wise and proud withal,

35

36

And cruel wrath by love hath been appeased,
For love lends lustre to an honorable name,
And saves mankind from wickedness and shame.

37

Than one that breaks, and therefore pray take heed
To follow love, that best can guide and lead

38

But now to leave attendant thoughts withal,
And come to Priam's son, of whom I told,
And passing by all things collateral,
My proper tale hereafter I shall hold,
Both of his joy and of his cares so cold,
And all the business of this sad affair,
As I began, I shall to you declare

39

Within the fane this knight his wit
displayed,
Wandering at will and scattering jokes about,
And idly here, now there, his gazing strayed
On ladies of the town and from without;
And thus his roving eye, by chance no doubt,
Passed o'er the crowd and reached the very spot
Where Cressida stood, and then no further got

40

And suddenly amazement came unbidden,
As more intent he bent on her his eyes
"O Jupiter," he thought, "where has she hidden,
Whose beauty, shining bright, revealed now lies?"
And then his heart began to swell and rise,
But sighing soft that not a soul could hear,
He straight again began to laugh and jeer

41

Honor and dignity and woman's pride

42

And Troilus, the more he saw, the more
Was pleased with all her form and features clear,
But still she kept her eyes upon the floor,
Except she let one scornful glance appear,
As much as 'Well why shouldn't I stand here?"
But soon her eyes again grew soft and bright,
Which seemed to Troilus a goodly sight

43

From eyes to heart in Troilus there passed
So great a longing through this vision bred
That in his deepest soul fixed firm and fast
This lady's image love did now imbed,
And he who once had held so high his head,
Must now draw in his horns and hold him low,
As one who knows not where to turn or go

44

Lo, he who ne'er before had known defeat,
And scorned all who in Love's dominion lie,

45

Thus still he stood, where he could well behold
This one in black, who hath his heart enchained,

Than that that brest, and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.

38

But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,
Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joye, and of his cares colde,
And al his werk, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I wil ther-to refere

39

With-inne the temple he wente him forth
pleyinge,
This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
On this lady and now on that lokinge,
Wher-so she were of toune, or of withoute:
And up-on cas bifel, that thorugh a route
His eye perced, and so depe it wente,
Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

40

And sodeynly he wex ther-with astoned,

And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere

41

She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seminge
And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
Shewede wel, that men might in hir gesse
Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.

42

To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle
Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
Ascaunces, "what! may I not stonden here?"
And after that hir loking gan she lighte,
That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte

43

And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
So greet desir, and swich affeccioun,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun
And though he erst hadde poured up and doun,
He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinke,
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke

44

That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte,
Blessed be love, that thus can folk convertel

45

She, this in blak, lykinge to Troilus,
Over alle thing he stood for to biholde;

Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne worde tolde,
But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.

46

And after this, not fulliche al a-whaped,
... al esliche he wente,
...d
...nte,

47

Whan he was *fro the temple* thus departed,
He streyght anoon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-
darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth,
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;
And ay, of loves servants every whyle,
Him-self to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle.

48

And seyde, "lord, so ye live al in lest,
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit as often harm ther-of as prow,
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, god wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!

49

In noun-certeyn ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be,
Ne no-thing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee,
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!

50

But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun,
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn anoon;
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!"

51

... he say his tyme,
...d,
...e,
...te

52

And whan that he in chaumbre was allone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-outen lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse

... he told
...l,
...l,
...ended,

46

And afterward, not dead but deadly smitten,
Out of the temple quietly he went,
Regretting all his jests and jibes hard bitten
... love and fearing the descent
... low,

47

...

dart,
But lest his manner may his state bewray,
He cultivates a bearing light and gay,
And at Love's servants still doth jest and smile,
Driven at last to such deceit and guile.

48

"Good Lord," he says, "you lovers are well paid!
See how the cleverest one among you all,
Whose duty is most faithfully displayed,
Must bear the whips and scorns that on you fall!
You get your pay, if pay one can it call,
Not good for good but scorn for duty done,
In faith, your order is a goodly one!

49

"... vain are all your worship and your rites,
...
...hts,

50

... oft eschew,
...t,
...d
...d!"

51

But nevertheless, when he found good occasion,
He held his peace, the best thing he could do!
... had clipped his wings, and no evasion

52

... at last he was alone,

53

And then he made a mirror of his mind,
In which he saw her features all complete,
And thought perhaps occasion he might find
For such a lady's favor to compete,
And maybe might with her approval meet,
Or win from her at least sufficient grace
To grant to him a humble servant's place.

53

Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure,
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace.

54

And he surmised the effort were not vain,
That in her goodly service he might spend,
And love for such a one, he dared maintain,
If it were known, all persons would commend,
Especially those whose hopes on love depend—
This was at first his line of argument,
Unwarned by any sign or sad portent

54

Imagininge that travaille nor grame
Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
As she, ne him for his desir ne shame,
Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born
Of alle lovers wel more than biforn,
Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.

55

The art of love thus minded to pursue,
He thought he would begin first secretly,
And hide his new endeavor from all view,
[illegible]

55

Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,
And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
First, to hyden his desir in muwe
[illegible]

56

Yet more than this—he gave much careful thought
On what to speak and when he should hold in,
[illegible]

56

And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what to arten hir to love he soughte,
And on a song anoon-right to biginne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne,
For with good hope he gan fully assente
Criseyde for to love, and nought repente

57

The content of this song when it was sung,
As given by my author Lollius,
Except for variation in the tongue,
Was word for word the song of Troilus,
And every word he sang exactly thus,
As I shall say, and as you now may hear,
If you will grant me your attentive ear

57

And of his song nought only the sentence,
As writ myn autour called Lollius,
But pleynly, save our tonges difference,
I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
Seyde in his song, lo! every word right thus
As I shal seyn, and who-so list it here,
Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

THE SONG OF TROILUS

58

[illegible]
That comes from love, itself with joy doth link,
For still I thirst the more, the more I drink.

58

"If no love is, O god, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thing and whiche is he?
If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?
If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
When every torment and adversitee
That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
For ay thurst I, the more that I it drinke.

59

"And if I burn but with my own desire,
Whence comes my lamentation and my
plaint?
[illegible]

59

And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my
pleynte?
If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte
O quike deeth, o swete harm so queynte,
How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
But-if that I consente that it be?

60

"If I consent, with wrong I then complain!
Behold how to and fro I merely toss,

60

And if that I consente, I wrongfully
Compleyne, y-wis, thus possed to and fro,

Al sterelees with-inne a boot am I
A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
That in contrarie stonden ever mo
Allas! what is this wonder maladye?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I dye"

61

And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous voys, "O lord, now youres is
My spirit, which that oughte youres be
Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this,
But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis,
She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve,
But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve

62

Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to your vertu digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne,
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere"

63

In him ne deyned sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wher-fro god me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowesse,
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brende him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe

64

So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought,
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese,
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the neer he was, the more he brende.

65

For ay the neer the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes yë,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene

66

Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to him-self a thousand tyme he seyde,
"Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde god, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!
My dere herte, allas! myn hele and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe"

67

Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Bothe of th'assege and his savacioun,
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde
But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure,
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!

Within a boat upon the wayless main,
While vexing winds each other ever cross,
And leave me rudderless to stand at loss!
Alas, what sickness strange in me doth lie,
With chill of heat and heat of cold I die!"

61

Then to the God of Love anon he spake
With plaintive voice, "Thou, Lord, who solely hast
Taken my heart, and rightly dost it take,
I thank thee, Lord, for all that now hath passed!
For now that I have found my love at last,
My homage to her shall I ne'er deny,
But as her man, I still shall live and die!

62

"In her esteem thou hold'st a lofty place,
And for thy power such is rightly thine,
And therefore, Lord, turn not from me thy face,
But be thou gracious to me and benign,
For now my royal rank I all resign
Into her hands, and humbly standing here,
Become her man, and she my lady dear!"

63

No favor to his royal rank Love showed,
For from this flame no rank can ever save,
Nor parted from his customary mode,
For all he was a knight so bold and brave,
But held him in distress as thrall and slave,
And burned him in so many ways and new,
That sixty times a day he changed his hue

64

So much from day to day his quickening thought
Now dwelt on her, and love thereby increase,
That every usual task he set at naught,
Yet often strove to make his burning cease
By sight of her, in hope to find release
From this uneasy burden that he bore—
But ever the nearer, ever he loved the more!

65

For ever the nearer, the hotter is the fire—
And this of course you know as well as I—
But were he farther off or were he nigher,
The eye of the heart that in the breast doth lie,
By day or night with courage low or high,
Was still on her, with whom, she was so fair,
Helen nor Polyxena could compare

66

And of the day there passed no single hour,
But to himself a thousand times he said,
"Thou good and gracious one, whom with all power
I serve, some pity cast upon my head,
For with affliction I am nearly dead!
Dear heart, gone is my joy and gone my life,
Unless your pity end this mortal strife!"

67

All other thoughts from out his mind had fled—
The Greeks and all his warlike reputation,
Desire new no offspring in him bred,
But reasons leading to one consummation,
That she on him would show commiseration,
And as her man, let him through life endure—
O what a life, for death, O what a cure!

68

Not Hector's nor his other brothers' feats
Of arms, in many sharp attacks well proved,
Stirred him to such like charges or retreats,
Yet nevertheless, wherever peril moved,
There was he found, and as he fiercely loved,
So fiercely fought, such wondrous deeds achieving,
They seemed to men almost beyond believing

69

But not for hatred of the Greeks he raged,
Nor yet to aid the rescue of the town,
But mightily in arms he battle waged
For this sole end, to cast opponents down
And win his lady's favor by renown,
And so his warlike valor shone so splendid,
That fear of death on all the Greeks descended

70

And love that made him bold, made him to sleep
The less and still his multiplying sorrow
Such hold upon his heart and soul doth keep,
It stood revealed with each returning morrow
Upon his face, and he was fain to borrow
The name of other ill, lest men might know
It was the fire of love that changed him so.

71

He said he had a fever, was not well,
Whatever shyness makes a man to say,
But to his lady not a word could tell,
Although perhaps she guessed it anyway;
The fact remained, he got but little pay
For all his service, since she gave no thought
To what he had or what he hadn't wrought

72

And then there fell on him another woe
From which his troubled mind could not be freed,
The fear that she might love another so
That his poor suit she would in no wise heed,
But though the thought made him at heart to bleed,
Yet never a move, for all the world to win,
To make his sorrow known durst he begin

73

But in his moments of relief from care,
Thus to himself he often would complain,
And say, 'O fool, now art thou in the snare,
Who once did jest at love and all its pain!
Now art thou caught! Now go and gnaw thy chain!
Thou once wert wont that love to reprehend
From which thyself thou canst not now defend

74

"What will now every lover say of thee,
[illegible]

And held all lovers in such low despite!
But now, thank God, his place is in the dance
Of those whom Love delayeth to advance'

75

'But O, thou woful Troilus, would God
[illegible]

68

The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only ther-fore ones meve,
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or riden,
Founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle

69

But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun,
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.

70

And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep,
And made his mete his foo, and eek his sorwe
Gan multiplye, that, who-so toke keep,
It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe;
Therfor a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
That the hote fyr of love him brende.

71

And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis;
But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
If that his lady understood not this,
Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye,
But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
Ne semed it [as] that she of him roughte,
Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.

72

But than fel to this Troylus such wo,
That he was wel neigh wood, for ay his drede
Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
That never of him she wolde have taken hede,
For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.
Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
To tellen it, for al this world to winne.

73

But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne,
He sayde, "O fool, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom japedest at loves peyne,
Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne,
Thou were ay wont eche lovere reprehende
Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.

74

What wole now every lover seyn of thee,
If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
Laughen in scorn, and seyn, 'lo, ther gooth he,
[illegible]

75

But, O thou woful Troilus, god wolde,
Sin thow most loven thurgh thy destinee,
That thow beset were on swich oon that sholde
Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee.
But al so cold in love, towardes thee,

Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone

76
God wolde I were aryved in the port
Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
A, lord, to me it were a greet comfort,
Then were I quit of languisshing in drede.
For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede
I shal bi-iaped been a thousand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

77
But now help god, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste!
O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete!"

78
This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
[illegible]

79
Bi-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and care
"Allas!" quod he, "who causeth al this fare?
O mercy, god! what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?

80
Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that bi-seged han our toun,
And so can leye our iolytee on presse,
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!"

81
These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swich thing he mighte him angry
  maken,
[illegible]

82
"What cas," quod Troilus, "or what aventure
Hath gyded thee to see my languisshinge,
That am refus of every creature?
[illegible]

83
But if thou wene I be thus syk for drede,
It is not so, and ther-for scorne nought,

As frost is cold beneath the winter moon,
Like snow in flame, so thou must perish soon!

76
[illegible]

77
"Now help, O God, and help, my lady sweet,
[illegible]
Now with some kindly glance my heart restore,
Although you never grant me favor more!"

78
These words, and more, within his room he spake,
And begged his lady, in his grief profound,
Some recognition of his love to make,
[illegible]

79
Lamenting in his chamber thus alone,
A friend, whose name was Pandar, happened there,
And coming in by chance, he heard him groan,
And saw his friend in great distress and care
"What ho, my friend!" he cried, "Why this despair?
What nasty trick does fortune on you serve?
Or have the naughty Greeks got on your nerve?

80
[illegible]
God curse the Greeks who lie in siege about
Our town, and turn our joy into distress
By driving jolly folk to holiness!"

81
He spoke these words as I them to you say,
That Troilus to anger might be
  stirred,
And sorrow thus to anger giving way,
To deeds of courage once again be spurred,
For well he knew, and well all men have heard,
There was among the Trojans none more bold,
Or none whom men in higher honor hold

82
"What chance," said Troilus, "what accident,
Hath led thee here to see my wretched state,
Where I deserted and alone lament?
[illegible]

83
"But if you think that I am sick from fear,
It is not so, and therefore scorn me naught.

There's something else that touches me more near
Than anything the Greeks as yet have wrought,
And brings on me this sad and mortal
thought
But though I may not now to thee confide it
Please don't be vexed 'tis best that I should hide it"

Ther is a nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and
thought
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste,
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the beste"

84

Then Pandar yearning for this hapless youth
Replied and said Alas what can this be?
Good friend if faithful love or constant truth

This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyde, "allas! what may this be?
Now freend," quod he, "if ever love or trouthe
Hath been, or is, bi twixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care,
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?

85

And I will gladly share with you your pain

So tell your woe for tell you must at last

I wole parten with thee al thy peyne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort,
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,
To entreparten wo, as glad desport
I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report,
In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve,
Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve"

86

Troilus heaved a deep and mournful sigh
And said to him Perhaps it may be best
If with your friendly wish I should comply,

I'll tell it thee friend just how it stands with me

Then gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, "god leve it be my beste
To telle it thee, for, sith it may thee lyke,
Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste,
And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste
But lest thow deme I truste not to thee,
Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me

87

Lo Love against which he who most deferdeth
Himself the more thereby his effort faileth
This Love so far his rule o'er me extendeth
That now my heart to death a straight course saileth!

Love, a yeins the which who-so defendeth
Him selven most, him alder lest avayleth,
With desespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,
That streyght un to the deeth myn herte sayleth
Ther to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
That to ben slayn it were a gretter joye
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

88

In what I've said methinks to you I've told
More than enough about my cause of woe
But for the love of God my care so cold
Conceal it well! For what you only know
If further spread great harms might after grow
Now go and live in joy and happiness
And let me die abandoned to distress

Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
That I have seyd, for now wostow my wo,
And for the love of god, my colde care
So hyd it wel, I tele it never to mo,
For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
If it were wist, but be thou in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse"

89

To hide this from me was unkindly done'
Pandar replied and it was most unwise
For maybe you have set your heart on one
Of whom I might with profit you advise
'Maybe indeed' cried he in great surprise,
'In love you never had the slightest chance
How can you then another's love advance?

"How hastow thus unkindely and longe
Hid this fro me, thou fool?" quod Pandarus,
"Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
That myn avys anoon may helpen us"
"This were a wonder thing," quod Troilus,
"Thou coudest never in love thy selven wisse,
How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?"

90

Now listen Troilus replied his friend
'Perhaps I am a fool yet it is so
That folly oft can helpful counsel lend
Whereby the wise the better way may know
For I myself have seen a blind man go
Where he would fall who sees both far and wide,
Sometimes a fool can be the safest guide

"Ye, Troilus, now herke," quod Pandare,
"Though I be nyce, it happeth ofte so,
That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare
By good counseyl can kepe his freend ther fro
I have my self eek seyn a blind man go
Ther as he fel that coude loke wyde,
A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde

91

A whetston is no kerving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis
And ther thow woost that I have ought miswent,
Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee scole is,
Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis
If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared,
By his contrarie is every thing declared

92

For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
To him that never tasted bitternesse?
Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
Ech set by other, more for other semeth,
As men may see, and so the wyse it demeth.

93

Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,
I, that have in love so ofte assayed
Grevaunces, oughte conne, and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge, it shal the lasse dere.

94

I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that y-cleped was Oënone,
Wroot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse
Ye sey the lettre that she wroot, y gesse?"
"Nay, never yet, y-wis," quod Troilus
"Now," quod Pandare, "herkneth, it was thus —

95

'Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,'
Quod she, 'and coude in every wightes care
Remede and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to him-self his conninge was ful bare,
For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete '—

96

Right so fare I, unhappily for me,
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore,
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self, repreve me no more
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thyn help yet somwhat can I seye

97

And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,
That I shal never mo discoveren thee,
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste,
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste

98

Therfore, as freend fullich in me assure,
And tel me plat what is thyn enchesoun,
And final cause of wo that ye endure,
For douteth no-thing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun

91

"A whetstone is no carving instrument,
And yet it maketh sharp the carving tool,
And if you see my efforts wrongly spent,
Eschew that course and learn out of my school,
For thus the wise may profit by the fool,
And edge his wit, and grow more keen and wary,
For wisdom shines opposed to its contrary

92

'For how might sweetness ever have been known
To him who never tasted bitterness?
Felicity exists for those alone
Who first have suffered sorrow and distress
Thus white by black honor by shame's excess,
More brightly shines by what the other seems,
As all men see and as the wise man deems.

93

"By opposites does one in wisdom grow
And though I have in love vain effort made,
Then all the better I thereby should know
To guide thee on thy path when thou hast strayed.
Spurn not with scorn therefore my proffered aid,
For I desire nothing but to share
Thy grief, and make it easier to bear

94

Indeed I am a quite good parallel
To what Oenone once a shepherdess,
To your own brother Paris said so well,
Writing in grief of heart and heaviness,
You've seen the letter that she wrote I guess?"
' No that I haven t answered Troilus
' Then listen,' Pandar said, for it goes thus

95

" Excelling in the art of medicine,
Phoebus could rightly find for each disease
A cure through herbs that he was well versed in,
But to himself his skill could bring no ease,
When love on him did violently seize
For old Admetus daughter king of Greece,
Nor all his art could bid his sorrows cease '

96

So goes it now, unhappily with me.
I love in vain that's why my heart is sore,
And yet it may be I can counsel thee
And not myself Reprove me now no more,
I have no cause I know, on high to soar
As doth a hawk when he would sport and play,
But still that doesn t mean I ve naught to say

97

' And one thing you may count a certainty,
I d rather die in great and mortal pain
Than breathe a word of what you say to me,
You need not fear that I would you restrain,
Though it were Helen s love you sought to gain,
Your brother s wife, whatever be her name,
For me I ll let you love her all the same

98

' In my good friendship you can rest secure,
If to me you will only plainly mention
The source of all the grief that you endure,
For do not think I have the least intention
To speak to you by way of reprehension

In this affair; for no one can prevent
A man from loving, ere his love is spent

99

"That both of these are vices is well seen—
[illegible]

For I mean only good and no offence

100

'Solomon saith 'Take heed who stands alone,
For if he falls, there's none to help him rise'
But since thou hast a friend, to him make known
Thy grief, for we can better ways devise
To win thy love in more effective wise
Than lie and weep, like Niobe the queen,
Whose tears remain in marble to be seen

101

"So now give o'er this lachrymose distress,
Of things that lighten grief now let us speak,
For thus thy time of sorrow may seem less
Take not delight in woe thy woe to seek,
For fools alone sorrow with sorrow eke,
Who when they fall in some mishap and grief,
Neglect to look elsewhere for their relief

102

'Men say that 'Misery loves company,'
And this is by no means a saying vain,
But one in which we both ought to agree,
[illegible]

103

'I take it thou art not afraid of me,
Lest of thy lady I should thee beguile
You know yourself I am not fancy free,
But serve a lady dear for this long while,
And since you need fear neither trick nor wile,
And if your trust and confidence I hold,
Tell me as much as I to you have told"

104

[illegible]
And then cast up his eyes, so that great fear
Had Pandar, lest in sudden frenzy falling,
His soul might flit away beyond recalling

105

[illegible]
pluck,
But from that sound no melody can suck
His heart to gladden in the very least,
Because he is a dull and brutish beast?"

106

Pandar from further speech with that refrained,
But not a word would Troilus reply,

To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.

99

And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces,
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve,
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
For for to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, and do thee som wight triste,
Thy wo to telle, and tel me, if thee liste.

100

The wyse seyth, 'wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse;'
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone,
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.

101

Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,
And lat us lissen wo with other speche;
So may thy woful tyme seme lesse
Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
And listen nought to seche hem other cure.

102

Men seyn, 'to wrecche is consolacioun
To have an-other felawe in his peyne,'
That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
That certeynly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space.

103

[illegible]
And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost"

104

Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
But longe he lay as stille as he ded were,
And after this with sykinge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus voys he lente his ere,
And up his eyen caste he, that in fere
Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
He sholde falle, or elles sone dye

105

And cryde "a-wake" ful wonderly and sharpe;
"What? slombrestow as in a lytargye?
Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
That hereth soun, whan men the strenges plye,
But in his minde of that no melodye
May sinken, him to glade, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?"

106

And with that Pandare of his wordes stente;
But Troilus yet him no word answerde,

For why to telle nas not his entente
To never no man, for whom that he so ferde
For it is seyd, ' man maketh ofte a yerde
With which the maker is him-self y beten
In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten,

107

And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
That toucheth love that oughte be secree,
For of him self it wolde y nough out-springe,
But if that it the bet governed be
Eek som tyme it is craft to seme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste,
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste

108

But natheles, whan he had herd him crye
Awake!" he gan to syke wonder sore,
And seyde, "freend, though that I stille lye,
I am not deef, now pees, and cry no more,
For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore,
But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
For thy proverbes may me nought avayle

109

Nor other cure canstow noon for me
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye,
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye "
"No,' quod tho Pandarus, "therefore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe

110

Now knowe I that ther reson in thee fayleth
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
For whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth,
Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?"
Why, nay," quod he, by god and by my trouthe! '

111

What? not as bisily," quod Pandarus,
' As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?"
"No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus
' And why? '—"For that thou sholdest never spede "
' Wostow that wel? '—"Ye, that is out of drede,"
Quod Troilus, ' for al that ever ye conne
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne "

112

Quod Pandarus, "allas! what may this be,
That thou despeyred art thus causelees?
What? liveth not thy lady? *benedicite!*
How wostow so that thou art graceless?
Swich yvel is not alwey botelees
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure

113

I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle
Whos stomak foules tyren ever mo
That highte volturis as bokes telle
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun

For never once the thought he entertained
To tell for whom he thus must weep and sigh
For it is said Man makes the stick whereby
The maker himself is beaten in his turn ,
This bit of wisdom from the wise we learn

107

And specially he planned few confidences
In love for love should grow in secrecy
Since of itself love breaks through all defences,
If one should fail to guard it zealously
And sometimes it is art to seem to flee
The thing which in effect one is pursuing
Such thoughts was Troilus in mind reviewing.

108

When thus so loudly he heard Pandar cry
Wake up! ' then he began to sigh full sore
And said, Good friend although so still I lie
I am not deaf! Now peace and say no more,
For I have heard your wisdom and your lore
Leave me in peace my mishap to bewail
For all your proverbs may me naught avail

109

You cannot find a remedy for me
Besides I want no cure I want to die!
And what care I for your queen Niobe?
You ve told enough of old wives tales say I
Well then said Pandar let me but reply
That fools alone their woes and griefs enjoy
And shun the remedies they might employ

110

It seems to me you must have lost your reason!
But tell me this if I her name but knew
In all good faith and with no taint of treason
Durst I then tell her in her ear for you
What you yourself have not the nerve to do
And beg of her some little sign to show?
No no cried Troilus I tell you no!

111

What said Pandar not even if I tried
As though it were my own affair and need? '
Most surely not said Troilus replied
But why? Because you never could succeed
How do you know? I know quite well indeed "
Said Troilus when all is sa d and done
She will by no such wretch as I be won

112

O well said Pandar it may quite well be
That w thout cause you are thus in despair
For look your lady is not dead is she?
Ho v can you tell beforehand how you'll fare?
Such evils are not oft beyond repair!
And why must you the worst always suppose
Although the outcome you nor no one knows?

113

I grant you well your grief is quite as sore
And sharp as that of Tityos in hell
Whose heart continually the vultures tore
According to the stories old books tell,
But still I can t permit you thus to d vell
Under the vain and baseless imputation
You've caught an ill for which there s no salvation.

114

You will not give a reason more or less
But supine on your bed yourself you stretch—
I ask what woman could love such a wretch?

115

And how can she account then for your death,
If you thus die and she knows nothing why
Except for fear you breathed your final breath

116

You may here weep alone and pray and kneel
But if the one you love of this knows naught
How can she make return that you can feel—
Unknown unkissed and lost who is unsought!
Lo many a man his love hath dearly bought
And twenty years opined were not too much
To win the right his lady s lips to touch

117

But should he therefore fall in dark despair
Or as a recreant himself demean
Or slay himself because his lady s fair?
No no let love be ever fresh and green
Let each forever cherish his heart s queen
And think it is love s guerdon but to serve
A thousandfold more than he doth deserve

118

To these wise words then Troilus took heed
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And useless too in every jot and tittle
Since of his woe she knew st ll less than little

119

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
I give my word within a day or two
I ll bring you news the best you ever got
Or have me drawn and quartered on the spot

120

'That s what you say cried Troilus alas
But saying so that will not make it so!
For my affairs have come to such a pass
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

121

'So then said Pandar Fortune is to blame
For your own feelings! Now at last I see!
But don t you know that Fortune is the same
To all alive in varying degree?
But of one comfort you have certainty

114

But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisinesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyest as he that list of no-thing recche
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?

115

What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is,
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones,
'The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!'

116

Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele,
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele,
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is unsought
What! many a man hath love ful dere y bought
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,
That never yet his lady mouth he kiste

117

What? shulde he therfor fallen in despeyr,
Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,
Or sleen him self, al be his lady fayr?
Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
A thousand fold more than he can deserve"

118

And of that word took hede Troilus,
And thoughte anoon what folye he was inne,
And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
That for to sleen him self mighte he not winne,
But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte,
For of his wo, god woot, she knew ful lyte

119

And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
And seyde, 'allas! what is me best to do?'
To whom Pandare answerde, 'if thee lyke,
The best is that thou telle me thy wo,
And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
I be thy bote, or that it be ful longe,
To peces do me drawe, and sithen honge!

120

Ye, so thou seyst," quod Troilus tho, 'allas!
But, god wot, it is not the rather so,
Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde,
For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde"

121

Quod Pandarus, 'than blamestow Fortune
For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst I see,
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
To every maner wight in som degree?
And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!

That, as hir joyes moten over goon,
So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon

122
For if hir wheel stinte any thing to torne,
Than cessed she Fortune anoon to be
Now sith hir wheel by no wey may sojorne,
What wostow if hir mutabilitee
Right as thy selven list, wol doon by thee,
Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?
Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!

123
And therfor wostow what I thee beseche?
Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde,
For who-so list have helping of his leche,
To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde
To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe,
By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe

124
Loke up I seye, and tel me what she is
Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede,
Knowe ich hir ought? for my love tel me this,
Than wolde I hopen rather for to spede
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame,
A ha quod Pandare, here bigınneth game! "

125
And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde, 'theef thou shalt hir name telle "
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake
As though men sholde han lad him in to helle,
And seyde, allas! of al my wo the welle,
Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!
And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde

126
And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene,
Lord he was glad and seyde, freend so dere,
Now fare a right for Joves name in hevene,
Love hath biset thee wel, be of good chere
For of good name and wysdom and manere
She hath y nough and eek of gentilesse,
If she be fayr, thow wost thy self, I gesse

127
Ne I never saw a more bountevous
Of hir estat ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier ne a more gracious
For to do wel ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon, and al this bet to eche,
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,
A kinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche

128
And for thy loke of good comfort thou be,
For certe

129
And also thenk, and ther with glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is some pitee

For as all joys on earth are short and brief
So time will bring for sorrow its relief

122
Because if Fortune s wheel should cease to turn
Then Fortune she at once no more would be
And since in no fixed place she may sojourn

123
And therefore do you know what I advise?
Look up! Don t keep your eyes upon the ground!
The sick must first unto the doctor s eyes
Reveal in what respect he is unsound
To Cerberus in hell may I be bound
If my own s ster were thy cause of sorrow
For all of me she should be thine tomorrow

124
If I had something clear on which to go
I d surely find the remedy you need

Aha! cried Pandar now I smell the game!

125

Mutn ureu Ul au my woe tue s urce and well
Is Cress da—and now you know her name!
And with these words he almost died for shame

126
When Pandar heard who was his lady love

127
She hath bes des a free and open hand
With all she owns is affable in speech
And how to do th ngs well doth understand
Yet never doth in doing overreach
But grac ous are her manners all and each
Such truth and honor in her heart ab de
A king s heart seems a poor thing there beside.

128

129
You have this reason to be glad besides
That since your lady hath these virtues all
Then pity also in her heart resides

130

However let us not be too austere

131

How often did you crack a foolish jest
And say Love s servants truly I d sown
For all are fools and God s apes at the best

132

aloft
But for all that must bend low at the last
And many such like jests on love you passed

133

And you maintained that for the greater part
All lovers loved but in a general way
Because they thought it was the safer art
A dozen loves at one time to essay
Now I might make such jests on you today
But won t because I m quite convinced in mind
That you ll not be a lover of that kind

134

Now beat thy breast and pray to God above
Thy mercy Lord! For now I do repent
Of all I ve said and deeply now I love!
Pray thus that thus the God may now relent!
Ah Lord cried Troilus hear my lament
Who pray to thee my jesting to forgive
As I shall jest no more the while I live!

135

Well prayed quoth Pandar Now it can be said
Thou hast the God of Love in all appeased
And since thou many a bitter tear hast shed

136

' For that same ground that bears the useless weed
Bears also wholesome herbs, and qute as oft
And where the rough and sting ng nettles breed
Waxes the rose so sweet and smooth and soft
And next the valley lifts the hill aloft,
And after n ght then comes the glad tomorrow
And so is joy the after end of sorrow

Amonges alle thise othere in general,
And for thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name,
For vertue streccheth not him self to shame

130

But wel is me that ever I was born,

At love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
'Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle '

131

How often hastow maad thy nyce japes,
And seyd, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee ben verray goddes apes,
And some wolde monche hir mete alone,
Ligging a bedde, and make hem for to grone,
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest god he sholde never kevere!

132

And some of hem toke on hem, for the colde,
More than y nough, so seydestow ful ofte
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen softe,
And thus they wolde han brought hem self a lofte,
And natheless were under at the laste,
Thus seydestow, and japedest ful faste

133

Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
These loveres wolden speke in general,
And thoughten that it was a siker art,
For fayling for to assayen over al
Now may I jape of thee, if that I shall
But nathelees, though that I sholde deye,
That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye

134

Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love,
'Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I mis spak, for now my self I love
Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente "
Quod Troilus, ' a! lord! I me consente,
And pray to thee my japes thou foryive,
And I shal never more whyl I live "

135

' Thow seyst wel,' quod Pandare, ' and now I hope
That thou the goddes wratthe hast al apesed,
And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
And seyd swich thing wher with thy god is plesed,
Now wolde never god but thou were esed
And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo
Here-after may thy comfort been al so

136

For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
Next the foule netle rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe,
And next the valey is the hil a lofte,
And next the derke night the glade morwe
And also joye is next the fyn of sorwe

137
Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,
And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,
Or elles al our labour is on ydel,
He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde,
Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.

138
But he that parted is in every place
Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse,
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

139
And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thy-self, for any hevinesse,
Hope alwey wel, for, but if drerinesse
Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende

140
And wostow why I am the lasse afered
[illegible]

141
And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
[illegible]

142
Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse,
For bothe yow to plese thus hope I
Her-afterward, for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be,
And so we may be gladed alle three

143
And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see
[illegible]

144
Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of god, that list hem to him drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most god in awe,

137
[illegible]

138
"A man divided in a dozen places
Is nowhere whole, philosophy doth show,
For his own labor he himself effaces
Do you know how this is? Why, just as though
You plant a tree or herb where it should grow,
And on the morrow pull it up alive—
No wonder if it thus should never thrive.

139
"And since the God of Love hath love bestowed
On thee full worthy of thy worthiness,
Stand fast, for to a good port hast thou rowed
Let not thy hope and courage e er grow less,
For only some great lack or some excess,
Or overhaste, can make our labor vain,
Whereby our happy end we shall attain

140
[illegible]
For love is planted in us one and all

141
[illegible]

142
"Therefore I am and will be ready still
[illegible]
And so in fact, we shall be glad all three

143
[illegible]

144
"To prove my point, recall how those great clerks
Who most have erred against a certain law,
And are converted from their wicked works
By God's good grace that doth them to him draw,
Are just the ones who hold God most in awe,

And grow into his most believing band
For they know best all error to withstand '

145
To all this preaching Troilus assented
Accepting likewise Pandar s proffered aid
Then waned the woes by which he d been
tormented

146
' But friend how shall my pain grow less acute
Till this is done? And also tell me first
What thou wilt say of me and of my suit

147
Now then said Pandar what the need to worry

148
But listen Pandar one word ere you go!
Don t think that towards my lady I desire
The slightest impropriety to show
Or to her harm in any way conspire
For I would rather bear my sorrows dire
Than have her think it was not understood,
That all I mean is meant for her own good '

149
"And I your backer " Pandar laughed O fie!
No need to tell me this for all say so!

150

151

To make me live or meet my fatal end

152
But Pandar, eager now his friend to serve,
To him in few and hasty words replied

And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alder best withstonde "

145
Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Criseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth,
untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, al though his herte pleyde,
"Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

146
But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? and goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here "

147
Quod Pandarus, "thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
For goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste "—
' Why, freend," quod he, "now do right as thee leste

148
But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye,
For dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode
But that, that mighte sounen in-to gode "

149
Tho lough this Pandare, and anoon answerde,
"And I thy borw? fy! no wight dooth but so,
I roughte nought though that she stode and herde
How that thou seyst, but fare-wel, I wol go
A-dieu! be glad! god spede us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse "

150
Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde, "now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, god shal helpe us at the laste,
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shal smerte,
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte!

151
Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art al!

To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde "

152
This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere,

"Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve,
Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt wel
here"—
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place

"Farewell, thy thanks I doubt not to deserve!
Have here my pledge, thou shalt be
satisfied!'
Then forth upon his thoughtful way he hied,
Considering how he might find time and place
Vicariously to win this lady's grace

153

For every wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte

153

For any man who hath a house to found,
[illegible]

And planned his work full wisely ere he wrought.

154

But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,
But up anoon up-on his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun,
Wo was that Greek that with him mette that day.
And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that loked on his face.

154

And Troilus, his sloth aside now laid,
Leaping upon his prancing gallant bay,
Upon the field the very lion played
Woe to the Greek who met with him that day!
And in the town he made such fine display
Of goodly conduct, that in every place
All loved him who but looked upon his face

155

For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thriftieste and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be
Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge

155

[illegible]

156

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Y-lissed wel, but heled no del
more,
And, as an esy pacient, the lore
Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure,
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure

156

Now let us cease of Troilus to speak,
Who feels like one who has been wounded sore,
And from his wound still aching and still weak,
But grown more calm, though healed not thus the
more,
Submits in patience to the doctor's lore,
Who skilfully his ill investigates—
So Troilus the final end awaits

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST BOOK

BOOK II

HERE BEGINNETH THE PROEM TO THE SECOND BOOK

1

Out of the [illegible]

But now of hope the calendes biginne

1

O [illegible]

2

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my
muse,
To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
Me nedeth here noon other art to use
For-why to every lovere I me excuse,

2

O lady mine, O Clio, glorious one,
Be thou henceforth my help, be thou my
muse,
To rhyme this book until the whole is done!
All other aid than thine I here refuse,
And therefore lovers all must me excuse,

If pure inventions I do not endite,
But only Latin into English write

That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte

3

Then give me neither thank nor give me blame
For all this work, for meekly I deny
The fault, if anywhere my tale be lame,

Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but pray yow mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I.
Eek though I speke of love unfelingly,
No wonder is, for it no-thing of newe is,
A blind man can nat juggen wel in hewis

4

Remember in the forms of speech comes change
Within a thousand years, and words that then
Were well esteemed seem foolish now and strange,
And yet they spake them so time and again,
And thrived in love as well as any men,
And so to win their loves in sundry days,
In sundry lands there are as many ways

Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
With inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thinketh hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in love as men now do,
Eek for to winne love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry been usages.

5

If then the situation should arise,
Should think "I'd do not so in such a case,"
Or wonder at his words or at his acts,
He may—for me, I merely state the facts

And for-thy if it happe in any wyse,
That here be any lovere in this place
That herkeneth, as the story wol devyse,
How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchace,
Or wondreth on his speche and his doinge,
I noot, but it is me no wonderinge,

6

As thus—so openly with glance or smile,
And visits, forms, and pretty speeches too,
But when in Rome, do as the Romans do

For every wight which that to Rome went,
Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere,
Eek in som lond were al the gamen shent,
If that they ferde in love as men don here,
As thus, in open doing or in chere,
In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hir sawes,
For-thy men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes

7

I doubt if in this land you could find three
Who'd act the same, if they in love should fall,
For what I like to you may hateful be,
And yet we reach the same end one and all,
Though some may carve on trees, some on a wall,
As it may chance—But now where I began,
My story I must hasten as I can

Eek scarsly been ther in this place three
That han in love seyd lyk and doon in al,
For to thy purpos this may lyken thee,
And thee right nought, yet al is seyd or shal,
Eek som men grave in tree, som in stoon wal,
As it bitit, but sin I have begonne,
Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne

HERE ENDETH THE PROEM TO THE SECOND BOOK

HERE BEGINNETH THE SECOND BOOK

8

In May, mother of months, when all is gay,
When flowers blue and white and red now grow

In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
That fresshe floures, blewe, and whyte, and rede,
As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde,

9

That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche,
Felte eek his part of loves shottes kene,
That, coude he never so wel of loving preche,
It made his hewe a day ful ofte grene,
So shoop it, that him fil that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.

10

The swalwe Proignè, with a sorwful lay,
Whan morwe com, gan make hir weymentinge,
Why she forshapen was, and ever lay
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

11

And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
Remembringe him his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eek his greet empryse,
And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone
Un-to his neces paleys ther bi-syde,
Now Janus, god of entree, thou him gyde!

12

Whan he was come un-to his neces place,
"Wher is my lady?" to hir folk seyde he,
And they him tolde, and he forth in gan pace,
And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she
With-inne a paved parlour, and they three
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.

13

[illegible]

To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette!"
And with that word she doun on bench him sette.

14

"Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
If god wole, al this yeer," quod Pandarus;
"But I am sory that I have yow let
To herknen of your book ye preysen thus;
For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us
Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!"
'Uncle," quod she, "your maistresse is not here!"

15

With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,
"This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede,
And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
[illegible]

16

Quod Pandarus, "al this knowe I my selve,
[illegible]

Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce"

17

"A! god forbede!" quod she, "be ye mad?
Is that a widewes lyf, so god you save?
By god, ye maken me right sore a-drad,
Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave!
It sete me wel bet ay in a cave

10

The swallow Progne, at the break of day,
In song began her still renewed lament
For her changed shape, but still great Pandar lay
[illegible]

11

He called aloud, now ready to arise,
Bethinking he must carry out ere noon
For Troilus his promised enterprise,
Reflecting, too, there was a right good moon
For such attempt, and took his way full soon
Unto his niece's palace there beside—
Now Janus, god of doorways, be his guide!

12

When he had been admitted at the door,
'Where is my lady, pray?" he briskly said;
[illegible]

13

"Madam," said Pandar, "and all this company,
How do you do, so busy with your book!'
"Why, uncle, pray come in," responded she,
And up she rose and by the hand him took,
And said, 'For three nights now—but let's not look
For bad luck just from that—I've dreamed of you,"
And led him to a chair with great to-do

14

"Why, niece, your dreams foretell to you some good,
For one whole year, I reckon," he replied.
"But I'm extremely sorry that I should
Thus interrupt when you are occupied
What is your book? You can in me confide!
Is it a tale of love? Come, let's draw near!"
'Uncle," she said, "your sweetheart isn't here!"

15

They laughed, and Cressida stopped to explain,
"This is the tale of Thebes wherein we read,

Who sank down in the ground and into hell."

16

"O yes, I know all that," Pandar replied,
[illegible]

17

"O God forbid!' she cried, "you must be mad!
Is that the way a widow should behave?
Indeed your style of speech is shocking bad,
And almost like a crazy man you rave,
For it would fit me better in a cave

To pray the saints and read their holy lives!
Let maidens go and dance and youthful wives

18

Well I could tell said Pandar with a laugh
A tale to make you want to sport and play!
Now uncle dear she sa d don t tease and chaff
[illegible]

19

Heavens alive! cried she what thing is that?
Why won t you tell? Indeed you stagger me!
[illegible]

20

Well no, he sa d I really wouldn t dare
Because it s not a tale on which you d thrive
And pray why not? she asked You aren t fair! '
Dear niece he sa d if this news should arrive
Unto your ears no prouder woman alive
There could be found in all the town of Troy,
And no exaggeration I employ!

21

This made her wonder more and ever more
And downward thoughtfully her eyes she cast
For ne er in her born days had she before
So longed with longing deep and unsurpassed
To know a thing but sighed and said at last
Well uncle dear of course I shan t insist
And you can tell me when and what you list '

22

And after that with pleasant conversation
And fr endly goss p both of man and maid
They keep the ball of speech in brisk rotation
[illegible]

23

He s well said Pandar well as any other
[illegible]
In truth and gentle b rth he is not less
In wisdom honor and ample worthiness

24

Good faith! cried Cress da that pleases me!
[illegible]
For strength and moral virtue one can find
Not often in a character comb ned

25

Indeed said Pandar that s the simple truth!
For verily these princes are a pair
Hector and Troilus, for all his youth

To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves."

18

"As ever thryve I," quod this Pandarus,
' Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye "
' Now uncle dere," quod she, tel it us
For goddes love, is than th assege aweye?
I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye "
"Nay, nay," quod he, ' as ever mote I thryve!
It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve "

19

' Ye, holy god! ' quod she, ' what thing is that?
What? bet than swiche fyve? ey, nay, y wis!
For al this world ne can I reden what
It sholde been, som jape, I trowe, is this,
And but your selven telle us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it al to lene,
As help me god, I noot nat what ye mene "

20

' And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,
This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve! '
' And why so, uncle myn? why so? quod she
' By god, quod he, ' that wole I telle as blyve,
For prouder womman were their noon on lyve,
And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye,
I jape nought, as ever have I joye!

21

Tho gan she wondren more than biforn
A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen caste,
For never, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thing desired she so faste,
And with a syk she seyde him at the laste,
' Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
Nor axen more, that may do yow disese "

22

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And freendly tales, and with mery chere,
Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
As freendes doon, whan they ben met y fere,
Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,
That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde

23

' Ful wel, I thanke it god, quod Pandarus,
' Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde,
And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that every vertu list abounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse "

24

' In good feith, eem,' quod she, ' that lyketh me,
[illegible]
For greet power and moral vertu here
Is selde y seye in o persone y fere '

25

' In good feith that is sooth,' quod Pandarus,
' But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,

That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that liveth under the sonne,
Hir might is wyde y knowe, and what they conne

26

Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle,
In al this world ther nis a bettre knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse welle,

26

'Of Hector there is nothing new to tell,

In truth I know not such another twain "

27

'By god," quod she, "of Ector that is sooth,
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I,
For dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
To every wight, that al the prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be "

27

For Hector,' answered she I quite agree,
And gladly think as well of Troilus,
For one hears every day how worthily
He bears himself in arms so generous
He is at home and ever courteous
The highest praise and name he hath acquired
From those whose praise is most to be desired "

28

"Ye sey right sooth, y wis," quod Pandarus,
'For yesterday, who-so hadde with him been,
He might have wondred up-on Troilus,
For never yet so thikke a swarm of been
Ne fleigh, as *Grekes fro him gonne fleen,*
And thorugh the feld, in every wightes ere,
Ther nas no cry but 'Troilus is there!'

28

'Quite true quite true, said Pandar in reply,
For yesterday as all the town agrees
It was a sight to fill a wondering eye
For never flew so thick a swarm of bees
As from him fled the Greeks with quaking knees,
And through the field in every person s ear
There was no cry but Troilus is here!

29

Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood, and Troilus,
Now hem he hurte, and hem alle doun he caste,
Ay where he wente it was arayed thus
He was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us,
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whyl that he held his blody swerd in honde

29

30

Therto he is the freendlieste man
Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve,
And wher him list, best felawshipe can

30

And yet he *is the friendliest* of souls,
For all his rank that ever I have seen,

31

31

And every wight that was a boute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer a wey to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde

32

Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus, "now is it tyme I wende,
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce
What list yow thus your-self to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure? '

32

33

"A! wel bithought! for love of god," quod she,

33

'*O that reminds me,*" said she smilingly

34

Sweethearts excepted—have I ever found,
That I love more than thee and least would grieve,
And this I think you know and well believe "

35

"O surely, uncle," said she, "and I'm duly
Grateful for all your long and friendly aid,
To no one have I been beholden truly

36

' But now, dear uncle, let me please beseech,
And as I trust in you, let me insist,
That you leave off this strange mysterious speech,
And tell me clear and plain whate'er you list "
Then Pandar said though first his niece he kissed,
' I will with pleasure, Cressida my dear,
But take it right, what I shall tell you here "

37

Beneath their little tricks you always find
The thing that from the first they had in mind

38

"And since the point is always at the end,
And since the end is here not hard to see,
Why should I strive my story to extend,
Between old friends like us, especially?"
And pausing then as serious as could be,
He *gazed intent and long into her face,*
And said, "On such a mirror, heaven's grace!"

39

And to himself he thought, "If what I say

For simple minds fear all men will deceive,
When they hear something hard to understand,
And so I ll lead her gently by the hand "

40

His steady looking filled her with surprise,
She wondered why he should be gazing so,
And said, ' Good Lord, don't eat me with your eyes!
You've seen me many a time before, you know "
"And better shall," he said, "before I go!
But I was wondering if you were to be
So fortunate, for now we soon shall see.

"Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?"
"No, this thing axeth layser," tho quod he,
"And eek me wolde muche greve, y-wis,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.

34

For, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Juppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye been the womman in this world livinge,
With-oute paramours, to my witinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel your-self, I leve "

35

"Y-wis, myn uncle," quod she, "grant mercy,
Your freendship have I founden ever yit,
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit,
And, with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende

36

But, for the love of god, I yow beseche,
As ye ben he that I most love and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde maner speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste".
And with that word hir uncle anoon hir kiste,
And seyde, "gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here "

37

With that she gan hir eyen doun to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, "nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,
How-so it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencioun,
Hir tale is al for some conclusioun

38

And with that word he gan right inwardly
Biholden hir, and loken on hir face,
And seyde, "on suche a mirour goode grace!"

39

Than thoughte he thus, "if I my tale endyte
Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han ther-in but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hir in my wil bigyle
For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
Ther-as they can nat pleynly understonde,
For-thy hir wit to serven wol I fonde"—

40

And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
And she was war that he byheld hir so,
And seyde, "lord! so faste ye me avyse!

41
For to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven,
And if that he wol take of it no cure,
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven,
But right his verray slouthe and wrecchednesse,
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse

42
Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take,
And, for the love of god, and eek of me,
Cacche it anoon, lest aventure slake
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
If that you list, a wight so wel begoon

43
And sith I speke of good entencioun,
As I to yow have told wel here-biforn,
And love as wel your honour and renoun
As creature in al this world y-born,
By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
Ne shal I never seen yow eft with yë

44
Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat, wher-to?
Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe,
For hardely, the werste of this is do,

45
'Now, my good eem, for goddes love, I preye,"
Quod she,' com of, and tel me what it is,
For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And eek me longeth it to wite, y wis
For whether it be wel or be amis,
Sey on, lat me not in this fere dwelle"
"So wol I doon, now herkneth, I shal telle

46

Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye

47
But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve,
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lyen,
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve"—

41

And he must take all blame from end to start

42
Good fortune niece hath lightly come thy way,
If thou wilt but accept it now as thine
And for the love of God without delay
Take hold of it, thy share do not decline
But need I now say more along this line?
Give me your hand for now it lies with you
To be the luckiest soul I ever knew

43
But let me speak again of my intention—
As I to you have often said before,
There is no living person I could mention
Whose honor and renown I cherish more,
By all the solemn oaths I ever swore,
If you are wroth at this or think I lie,
I shan t have nerve to look you in the eye.

44
Don t be so agitated! Pray, what for?
Don t look as though I meant some harm to you!
The worst is past and there is little more

45
Now uncle dear, ' she said for heaven s sake,
Hurry and tell me what it s all about
For I am both so scared with fear I quake,

46
Now Cressida my niece, the king s dear son,
The good the wise, the worthy, fresh and free,
Who seeks the good and ever so hath done,
The noble Troilus so loveth thee,
That life or death for him you must decree
So this is all! And as you shall reply,
Consider you will bid him live or die

47

Hastening to a fate you might prevent!
Alas that God such beauty to you sent!

49

But if you will in careless cruelty

[illegible]

So far to make amends for such a deed—
And so, before it is too late take heed!

50

[illegible]

And all ye fair adorned with beauty s seal
If therewith pity give not beauty worth
Twere pity you should d vell upon this earth!

51

[illegible]

Remember who I am for shame to me
As well as thee it were should my endeavor
The least dishonor bring upon you ever

52

Of course you understand I would not bind
You to him in the very least degree
But merely show yourself a little kind
And in such wise that he can plainly see
Whereby at least his life assured will be
Now here you have the whole of my intent
And all I ever thought or ever meant

53

And sure there s nothing strange in this request
And not a reason thereagainst to show
Suppose the worst—that you are fearful lest
Some folk will talk seeing him come and go
But I can answer that and will do so
That every man except the weak of mind
Nothing but friendliness therein will find

54

[illegible]

meet
Besides he won t come here so *frequently*
But that the whole world might look on and see

55

Such friendship you will find in all this town—
A cloak no doubt if folk will use it so
But as I hope to win salvation s crown
I ve given you the best advice I know
You can dear niece alleviate his woe
And if so be you can do nothing more
His death at least will not l e at your door

56

Cressida weighed these words, so doubtful wise
And thought I ll see just what he s coming to!

For to be slayn, if fortune wol assente,
Allas! that god yow swich a beautee sente!

49

If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a japere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede,
Avysement is good bifore the nede

50

Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!
Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees!
Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwith al in you ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!

51

And also thenk wel, that this is no gaude,
For me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baude,
As heye, as men mighte on us alle y see,
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me,
As wel as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente

52

Now understond, for I yow nought requere
To binde yow to him thorugh no beheste,
But only that ye make him bettre chere
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste
This al and som, and playnly our entente,
God helpe me so, I never other mente

53

Lo, this request is not but skile, y wis,
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon
I sette the worste that ye dredden this
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon,
Ther-ayeins answere I thus a noon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde,
Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde

54

What? who wol deme, though he see a man
To temple go, that he the images eteth?
Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
Governe him self that he no-thing foryeteth,
That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him geteth,
And eek ther to, he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the toun behelde?

55

Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun,
And wrye yow in that mantel ever mo,
And, god so wis be my savacioun,
As I have seyd, your beste is to do so
But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte'

56

Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
Thoughte, 'I shal fele what he meneth, y wis'"

"Now, eem," quod she, "what wolde ye devyse,
What is your reed I sholde doon of this?"
"That is wel seyd," quod he, "certayn, best is
That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
As love for love is skilful guerdoninge

57

Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a party of beautee,
And therfore, er that age thee devoure,
Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee
Lat this proverbe a lore un-to yow be,
'To late y-war,' quod Beautee, whan it paste;
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste

58

The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hyë,
'So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under your yë,
And sende yow thanne a mirour in to prye
In whiche ye may see your face a-morwe!'
Nece, I bid wisshe yow no more sorwe "

59

With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
And she bigan to breste a-wepe anoon
And seyde, "allas, for wo! why nere I deed?
For of this world the feith is al agoon!
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
When he, that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?

60

Allas! I wolde han trusted, doutelees,
That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
Had loved other him or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve,
This false world, allas! who may it leve?

61

What? is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of your beheste?
Is al this peynted proces seyd, allas!
Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
For so astoned am I that I deye!"

62

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke,
"A! may it be no bet?" quod *Pandarus*,
"By god, I shal *no-more* come here this wyke,
And god to-forn, that am mistrusted thus,
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I woful wrecche!
Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.

63

O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte,
O Furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I *with him, here I me shryve*, and seye
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye

"*Now, uncle*," said she, "what would you advise?
In your opinion, what is best *to do*?"
"Well said," he answered, "now I'll tell you true!
Since love for love is but a fair return,
It were great wrong his proffered love to spurn.

57

"*Remember time is* wasting every hour
Some share of all the beauty now we see,
And thus, ere age shall all thy charms devour,
Go love, for old, none will have aught of thee!
This saying *may a lesson to you be*,
'It might have been,' said Beauty, beauty past,
For age will dull all edges at the last.

58

"The courtly fool is wont *to cry* aloud
When *any woman holds her head too high*,
'Long may you live and all ye beauties proud,
Til crowsfeet come *to grow* beneath your eye,
And in your mirror may you then descry
The face that you shall wear for many a morrow!'
I hope and pray for you *no greater sorrow*!"

59

With these few words he stopped and bowed his head,
While Cressida with weeping eyes replied:
'Alas poor me! I wish that I were dead!
No honor in this world doth now abide,
For how shall I in strangers e'er confide,
When he who seemed to be my trusty friend
Would have me do what he should reprehend

60

'In very deed and truth, I should have thought,
If I had loved through chance unfortunate,
Him or Achilles or Hector, or shown aught
Of love to man of high or low estate,
Such conduct you would sternly reprobate,
And would me ever after discommend!
This faithless world, who may *on it* depend!

61

"*Is this your fateful* joy and happiness?
Is this your counsel this my lucky chance?
... that you to me profess?

She paused and sighed with sorrow deep and sore,
And Pandar asked, "*Is that all you can say?*
Well, I'll be blessed if e'er again your door
I darken if you doubt me in this way!
I see how *little heed to us you pay*,
Or to our death! Yet if it may but be
That he is saved, let fall what will on me!

63

"O cruel God, O most avenging Mars!
O Furies three of hell, on you I cry!
The door that to this house the entry bars
May I ne'er pass, if I meant harm thereby!
But since I see my lord and I *must die*,
Here let me say it with my final breath,
That wickedly you do us both to death.

64

And then he started off like one distraught,
But with restraining hand his cloak she caught,

65

66

She thought, "How often comes catastrophe
For love, and in such strange and dreadful way,
That men will treat themselves with cruelty
And if here in my presence he should slay
Himself, there d be a frightful price to pay!
What men would think of it, I do not know—,
Perhaps I d better go a little slow "

67

Aloud with heartfelt sigh she then replied,
"Ah, Lord what trouble on me thou has laid!
For my good name is periled on one side,
And thereagainst my uncle's life is weighed
But for all that, perhaps with heaven's aid,
Some way to save my name I can devise
And your life, too " With that she dried her eyes

68

69

"Yet will in no way raise his hopes too high,
For love a man I neither can nor may
Against my will, yet otherwise shall try
Honorably to please him day by day,
Nor had I once to all this thing said nay,
Were not my head so full of fantasies,
But stop the cause, you stop the whole disease!

70

"But here I make a solemn protestation,
That if you in this matter too far go,
Then certainly, for your nor his salvation,
Though both of you together die, and though
Each man alive become my deadly foe,
'Twill be the end of things twixt him and me "
"O certainly," said Pandar, "I agree "

71

"But tell me," said he, "can I trust in you

64

But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see,
For certayn, I wole deye as sone as he"—
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.

65

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe, and dradde hir wonder sore,

66

And thoughte thus, "unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in swich maner cas,
As men ben cruel in hem-self and wikke,
And if this man slee here him-self, allas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye,
It nedeth me ful sleyly for to pleye."

67

And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye,
"A! lord! what me is tid a sory chaunce!
For myn estat now lyth in jupartye,
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf," and stinte for to wepe.

68

"Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese;
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye no-thing elles me requere?"
"No, wis," quod he, "myn owene nece dere "
"Now wel," quod she, "and I wol doon my peyne,
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne,

69

But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

70

And here I make a protestacioun,
That in this proces if ye depper go,
That certaynly, for no savacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I never on him han other routhe "—
"I graunte wel," quod Pandare, "by my trouthe.

71

Quod he, "to pleyne, or after yow to preche?"
"Why, no, pardee, what nedeth more speche?"

72

[illegible]

Wot noon of hit but ye?" He seyde, "no "
"Can he wel speke of love?" quod she, "I preye,
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye."

73

[illegible]

Right for to speken of an ordenaunce,
How we the Grekes mighte disavaunce

74

Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro,
Til at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,
[illegible]

75

Tho gan I stalke him softely bihinde,
And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,
Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;
He seyde, "lord! have routhe up-on my peyn,
Al have I been rebel in myn entente,
Now, *mea culpa*, lord! I me repente.

76

O god, that at thy disposicioun
Ledest the fyn, by juste purveyaunce,
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
[illegible]

77

For certes, lord, [illegible]

And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,
That men hem wryen with asshen pale and dede '

78

With that he smoot his heed adoun anoon,
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely
And I with that gan stille awey to goon,
And leet ther-of as no-thing wist hadde I,
And come ayein anoon and stood him by,
And seyde, 'a-wake, ye slepen al to longe,
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,

79

That slepen so that no man may yow wake
Who sey ever or this so dul a man?'
'Ye, freend,' quod he, 'do ye your hedes ake

So that forever I shall have to preach?"
"Why no," she said, "what need of further speech?"

72

[illegible]

73

Then Pandar answered with a little smile
' I see no reason why I shouldn't tell!
The other day—'twas just a little while—
Within the palace garden, near a well,
Troilus and I in conversation fell
About some new and promising design
With which the Grecian force to undermine

74

[illegible]

And laid him down where soft the grass doth grow,
And I went farther off and left him so,
Until as I was walking there alone,
I heard him fearfully begin to groan

75

[illegible]

76

[illegible]

77

[illegible]

When covered o'er with ashes pale and dead '

78

"And then he laid his head upon the ground,
And muttered something which I couldn't hear,
And then I went away without a sound,
So that I might pretend to re appear,
And soon came back again, and standing near,
I cried 'Awake from out this slumber deep!
It's plain that love cannot disturb your sleep!

79

" 'You sleep so sound I scarcely can you wake!
Who ever saw, forsooth, so dull a man?'
'Let lovers,' said he, 'love till their heads ache,

80

' So it continued, till the other day
It chanced that I came wondering all alone
Into his chamber and found him where he lay
Upon his bed and man so sorely groan
I never heard but why he thus should moan
I did not know for soon as he saw me
He stopped his lamentation suddenly

81

' You well may think this made me grow suspicious,
And drawing near, I found him weeping sore,
And as I hope for grace from acts flagitious
I never saw a sight that touched me more,
With all my wit and all my wisest lore
This man I scarcely from his death could keep,
And even now my heart for him doth weep

82

' God knows not since the day that I was born,
Had I such need to any man to preach
Nor ever was there man so deeply sworn
Ere he would tell me who might be his leech!
But bid me not rehearse again his speech
And all his melancholy words repeat
Or I shall drop and faint here at your feet

83

' To save his life and with no other thought,
Except no harm to you thus am I driven!
And for God s love, who all the world have
wrought
See thou that life to both of us be given
And now to you in full my heart I ve shriven,
And since you see that it is pure and clean,
You know full well that I no evil mean

84

' I pray to God successful may you be,
Who such a fish hath caught without a net!
If you are wise as you are fair to see
Well in the ring then is the ruby set
You two will make the best pair ever yet!
And heaven bless the day which well assures
That you are his as much as he is yours

85

' Oho! I did not say that answered she

I meant it well by Mars with helm of steel!
So be not angry with me dearest
niece!
' O well," she said, for this time I ll make peace '

86

And then he took his leave and homeward bent
His way, with progress made well satisfied
And Cressida got up and straightway went
Into her private chamber close beside
And still as a stone she sat her down and tried
Each word that he had said to bring to mind,
And all interpretations of them find

For love, and lat me liven as I can.'
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresh a contenaunce
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce

80

This passed forth, til now, this other day,
It fel that I com roming al allone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Up-on his bed, but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,
Ne wiste I nought, for, as I was cominge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge

81

Of which I took somwhat suspecioun,
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore,
And god so wis be my savacioun,
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore,
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe,
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe

82

And god wot, never, sith that I was born,
Was I so bisy no man for to preche,
Ne never was to wight so depe y-sworn,
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to soune,
Ne did me not, but ye wol see me swowne

83

But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven,
And for the love of god that us hath
wrought,
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven
Now have I plat to yow myn herte schriven,
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene,
Tak hede ther-of, for I non yvel mene

84

And right good thrift, I pray to god, have ye,
That han swich oon y caught with-oute net,
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set
Ther were never two so wel y met,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre
Ther mighty god yet graunte us see that houre! '

85

"Now wel," quod she, ' foryeven be it here! '

86

With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente,
And lord, how he was glad and wel bi goon!
Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,
But straught in to hir closet wente anoon,
And sette here doun as stille as any stoon,
And every word gan up and doun to winde,
That he hadde seyd, as it com hir to minde,

87

And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,
[illegible] for the newe cas but whan that she
[illegible]

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,
Th'ascry aroos at skarmish al with-oute,
And men cryde in the strete, "see, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!"
With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute,
"A! go we see, caste up the latis wyde,
For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;

89

For other wey is fro the yate noon
Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne."
With that com he and al his folk anoon
An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne,
Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
For which, men say, may nought disturbed be
That shal bityden of necessitee.

90

This Troilus sat on his baye stede,
[illegible] ful richely,
[illegible]

So lyk a man of armes and a knight
He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowesse;
For bothe he hadde a body and a might
To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse,
And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,
So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heven up-on him for to see

92

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,
His sheld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
In which men mighte many an arwe finde
That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde,
And ay the peple cryde, "here cometh our joye,
And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye!"

93

For which he wex a litel reed for shame,
Whan he the peple up-on him herde cryen,
That to biholde it was a noble game,
How sobreliche he caste doun his yën.
Criseyda gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so softe it in hir herte sinke,
That to hir-self she seyde, "who yaf me drinke?"

94

For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,
[illegible] "lo, this is he
[illegible]

87

And she was somewhat troubled at the thought
[illegible] aught

88

And as she sat alone, reflecting thus,
The noise arose of skirmishers without,
And men cried in the street, "Lo, Troilus
[illegible]

89

"There is no other way here from the gates
[illegible]
[illegible] good bay steed.
[illegible]

91

He was the picture of a warrior knight,
A man of greatest prowess in all ways,
For bold in mind, he strove with equal might
In deeds that won a universal praise
It was pure joy upon this knight to gaze;
So fresh, so young, with such vitality,
He was, in truth, a heavenly sight to see

92

[illegible]

93

And Troilus a little blushed for shame,
When thus he heard the people shout and cry;
To watch him was as good as any game,
[illegible]

94

[illegible]
And then in modest fear that he might see,

She drew back from the casement window fast
As Troilus and all his people passed

95

And then in mind she canvassed up and down

And then she said, "This man to death to do,
'Twere pity, if his mind and heart are true"

96

97

Made deepest love within her heart to mine,
And only then, for proper service done,
And not by sudden glance, her love was won

98

And she was not in any case a foe
To Troilus from his first natal hour,
Whereby in love he had the greater power.

99

Let Troilus in peace his ways now go,
And let us turn to Cressida, shamefast
And pensive, sitting with her head bent low

100

Then in her heart she started to debate
Of this affair, as I have to you told,
And over this and that to hesitate
Till she had twisted it in many a fold,
And now her heart was warm now was it cold,
And some of what she thought I shall relate,
Though far too long were all of her debate

101

102

"I don't forget he is my sovereign's son,
And since he seems in me to take delight,
If I all his advances harshly shun,

Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whyl he and al the peple for-by paste,

95

And gan to caste and rollen up and doun
With-inne hir thought his excellent prowesse,

Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

96

Now mighte som envyous jangle thus,
"This was a sodeyn love, how mighte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troilus

97

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly

98

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hir seventhe hous of hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.
And, sooth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo
To Troilus in his nativitee,
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.

99

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste

100

And, lord! so she gan in hir thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow told,
And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,
And what she thoughte somwhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.

101

She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone

102

Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;
And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,
If I wolde utterly his sighte flee,

Paraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,
Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt,
Now were I wys, me hate to purchace,
With-outen nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

103

In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure
For though a man forbede dronkenesse,
He nought for bet that every creature
Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse,
Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,
I ne oughte not for that thing him despyse,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse

104

And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,
His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce
Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, is he noon,
To wys is he to do so gret a vyce
Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,
That he may make avaunt, by juste cause,
He shal me never binde in swiche a clause

105

Be they the wers? why, nay, with outen doute

106

I thenk eek how he able is for to have
Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,
To been his love, so she hir honour save,
For out and out he is the *worthieste*,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste
And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
But swich is love, and eek myn aventure

107

Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought,
For wel wot I my-self, so god me spede,
Al wolde I that noon wiste of this thought,
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodlieste who-so taketh hede,
And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye
What wonder is it though he of me have joye?

108

I am myn owene woman, wel at ese,

109

110

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,

103

In everything there should be moderation

And since for me he feels all this distress
No reason I should scorn him and despise,
That is if he behaves in goodly wise

104

But well I know and so does everyone
That he in all affairs is most discreet

105

But now suppose the worst should come about
And men should gossip of his love for me
Need that upon my name cast any doubt?
Can I stop him from that? Why he is free!
I know and every day I hear and see
That men love women yet no leave have they,
And when they want to stop they can and may!

106

Of course I know he is a splendid catch

But such is love, and such my lucky chance!

107

'That he should love me surely is no wonder,
For I am not so simple but I know
(Though naturally I say this only under
My breath) that I am fair as women go
Fairer than most though I myself say so
But plenty here in Troy will say the same
If he thinks well of me who can him blame?

108

For husbands all are full of jealousy
And masterful or hunting novelty!

109

110

Now like the sun in March which shines out bright,

Though oft the March sun too doth hide his face
For though the winds may put the clouds to flight
Their courses soon again the clouds retrace
So now a cloudy thought began to race
Across her heart o erspreading like a pall
Her sunny thoughts with shadowy thought withal.

111

The thought was this Alas since I am free
Should I now love and risk my happy state
And maybe put in bonds my liberty?
What folly such a course to contemplate!
Am I not satisfied to see the fate
Of others with their fear and joy and pain?
Who loveth not no cause hath to complain

112

For lovers ever lead a stormy life
And have done so since loving was begun
For always some distrust and foolish strife
There is in love some cloud across the sun
Then nothing by us women can be done
But weep in wretchedness and sit and think
This is our lot the cup of woe to drink!

113

And slanderous tongues they are so very quick
To do us harm and men are so untrue
[illegible]
But sharp attacks oft weaken at the end

114

Full often it hath been exemplified
The treason that to women men will show
And that s the end when such a love hath died
For what becomes of it when it doth go
No living creature on this earth can know
For then there s nothing left to love or spurn
What once was naught to nothing doth return

115

'And if I love how busy must I be
To guard aga nst all idle people s chatter
And fool them that they see no fault in me
For true or not to them it doesn t matter
If but their lying tales amuse or flatter
For who can stop the wagging of a tongue
Or sound of bells the while that they are rung!

116

But when her cloudy thoughts began to clear
She countered Nothing venture nothing gain!
All things must have their price or cheap or dear

117

Down stairs along the garden paths she went
And calling to her there her nieces three
They rambled through the garden s whole extent
Flexippe Tarbe and Antigone
A charming and a pleasant s ght to see
And others of her women came along
And in the garden made a merry throng

In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte
Which over sprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hir soule pace,
That over spradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle

111

That thought was this, 'allas! sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in jupartye
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hir dredful joye, hir constreynt, and hir peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne

112

For love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of him self, that ever was bigonne,
For ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over the sonne
Ther to we wrecched wommen no-thing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke,
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke

113

Also these wikked tonges been so prest
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrewe,
That, right anoon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe
But harm y-doon is doon, who-so it rewe
For though these men for love hem first to-rende,
Ful sharp biginning breketh ofte at ende

114

How ofte tyme hath it y knowen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?
To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicomth it, whan it is ago,
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth, lo, no wight on it sporneth,
That erst was no-thing, in to nought it torneth

115

How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that jangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me?
For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen,
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?'

116

And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde, he which that no-thing under taketh,
No-thing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere"
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh,
Than slepeth hope, and after dreed awaketh,
Now hoot, now cold, but thus, bi twixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to pleye

117

Adoun the steyre anoon right tho she wente
In to the gardin, with hir neces three,
And up and doun ther made many a wente,
Flexippe, she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was to see,
And othere of hir wommen, a gret route,
Hir folwede in the gardin al aboute

118

This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes,
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene,
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Trojan song to singe clere,
That it an heven was hir voys to here —

119

She seyde, "O love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best can, to yow, lord, yeve ich al
For ever more, myn hertes lust to rente
For never yet thy grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle joye and seurtee, out of drede

120

Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
In love, y wis, that al that bereth lyf
Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet,
For, lord with-outen jalousye or stryf,
I love oon which that is most ententyf
To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned

121

Now good thrift have he, wher so that he be!

122

123

And who so seyth that for to love is vyce,
Or thraldom, though he fele in it distresse,

124

What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his yen,
May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
Or love the wers though wrecches on it cryen?
No wele is worth that may no sorwe dryen.
And for thy, who that hath an heed of verre,
Fro cast of stones war him in the werre!

125

But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyd, wol love, un to my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste

118

It was a heavenly joy her voice to hear

119

For I opine that no one has been meant
By thy good grace a happier life to lead
Than I whose joy by thee has been decreed

120

O blissful God so happy is my state
No creature on this earth with creatures rife

121

For he whose mastership I here confess
The ground of truth and virtue s looking glass
Apollo for wit the rock of steadfastness

122

Such virtue loving to my heart doth lend
That day by day I feel my life amend

123

124

125

Though once with love I dreaded to begin
Now well I know no peril l es therein

126

When thus her song to happy end she brought
Cressida spoke up Dearest niece she said
Pray tell me who this pleasant ditty wrought?

127

128

And ask the devil if it s foul in hell

129

Cressida to this sa d nothing in reply
Observing but It s getting on to vard night
Yet all these words within her memory lie
Imprinted on her heart all clear and bright
And now indeed of love she feels less fright
Than she had done for now love sits at ease
Within her heart with greater power to please

130

131

132

And listening long this loving song sank deep
Within her heart before she fell asleep

133

And as she s'ept she dreamed and dream ng saw
A wondrous eagle feathered sno vy white
And from her breast he tore with curving claw

Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne "

126

And of hir song right with that word she stente,
And therwith al, now, nece," quod Criseyde,
' Who made this song with so good entente? '
Antigone answerde anoon, and seyde,
' Ma dame, y wis, the godlieste mayde
Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye,
And let hir lyf in most honour and joye "

127

"Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,"
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan ther with to syke,
And seyde, ' lord, is there swich blisse among
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?
"Ye, wis,' quod fresh Antigone the whyte,
' For alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve

128

But wene ye that every wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why, nay, y wis,
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot,
Do wey, do wey, they woot no-thing of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevene, why? for they conne telle,
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle '

129

Criseyde un to that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde, "y wis, it wol be night as faste "
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste,
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somwhat able to converte

130

The dayes honour, and the hevenes yë,
The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours y ronne,
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
For lak of light and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente y fere

131

So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste
Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte
Whan al was hust than lay she stille, and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse

132

A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay
That herkned she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente

133

And, as she sleep, anoon right tho hir mette,
How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,

And out hir herte he rente, and that a-noon,
And dide his herte in-to hir brest to goon,
Of which she nought agroos ne no-thing smerte,
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

134
Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
Fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
And in his chambre sit, and hath abiden
Til two or three of his messages yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
Til they him founde, and broughte him at the
laste

135
This Pandarus com leping in at ones
And seide thus, "who hath ben wel y-bete
To-day with swerdes, and with slinge-stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?"
And gan to jape, and seyde, "lord, so ye
swete!
But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste",
And he answerde him, "do we as thee leste"

136
With al the haste goodly that they mighte,

137
Quod Pandarus, "ly stille, and lat me slepe,
And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be,
And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe,

138
For thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne,
Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.
Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe"
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.

139
But right as floures, thorugh the colde of night
Y closed, stoupen on hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem a-yein the sonne bright,
And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe,
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde, "O Venus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here!"

140
And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
And seyde, "lord, al thyn be that I have,
For I am hool, al brosten been my bondes,
A thousand Troians who so that me yave,
Eche after other, god so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen, lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joye, it wol to sterte!

134

To look for Pandar, whom they straightway sought
And found and to the palace quickly
brought

135
Pandar came running in at once and said,

sweat!
But come, it's late, and time you should clean up"
"All right," said Troilus, 'let's go and sup"

136

137
"O hush!" said Pandar, 'let me go to sleep!
And you do, too! You have no need to worry,
But choose if you will dance or sing or leap.
Just trust in me and don't be in a hurry.
To tell the truth, she's in as great a flurry
As you are in, and near as resolute,
If only you don t slacken in pursuit.

138

139

140

To give me such a joy, for lo, my heart
So swells, it seems in fragments it must part

141
What shall I do? And how shall I survive?
And when again shall I my sweetheart see?
The tedious time away how shall I drive
Until you bring back further news to me?
Tis easy quite to say Go slow but he
That s hanging by the neck in mortal pain
Has no desire hanging to remain

142
Now now said Pandar by the love of Mars
You know that all things have their proper season
And that the night immediate action bars
But if you ll listen to a little reason
I ll *go the earliest hour that she agrees on*
In some things you must do just what I say
Or on some other man your charges lay

143
For heaven knows I ever yet have been
Ready at call nor ever to this night
Have I held back for though my wit be thin
I ve done my best according to my might
Do as I say and it will be all right
But if you won t to me it s all the same
Though in that case I shall not bear the blame

144
' I know that thou art wiser far than I
But were I in the selfsame fix as thou
I know the very plan that I would try
With my own hand I d go and write her now
A letter telling her exactly how
The love of her had driven me near crazy
Now stir yourself and don t be slack or lazy

145

As though it were upon some chance affair
And you will find us at a window seat
So shall I manage looking in the street

146

Just take it steady and on your way advance
And after you are gone to her I ll turn
And tell her things will make your ears both burn

147
Respecting that letter you are wise enough
Only I wouldn t write in too high style

Use it but once don t harp on it forever!

148
For though a harper were the best alive

141
But lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme a wey be driven,
Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?
Thou mayst answere, 'a byd a byd,' but he
That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,
In grete disese abydeth for the peyne "

142
"Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,"
Quod Pandarus, ' for every thing hath tyme,
So longe abyd til that the night departe,
For al so siker as thow lyst here by me,
And god toforn, I wol be there at pryme,
And for thy werk somwhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye

143
For pardee, god wot, I have ever yit
Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit
Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might
Do now as I shal seye, and fare a right,
And if thou nilt, wyte al thy self thy care,
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare

144
I woot wel that thow wyser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir beseche of routhe,
Now help thy self, and leve it not for slouthe

145
And I my self shal ther-with to hir goon
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there,

146
And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
And up-on me makē thy contenaunce,
But by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, god shilde us fro mischaunce!
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce,
And we shal speke of thee som what, I trowe,
Whan thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!

147
Touching thy lettre, thou art wys y nough,
I woot thow nilt it digneliche endyte
As make it with thise argumentes tough,
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte,
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte,
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte

148
For though the beste harpour upon lyve
Wolde on the beste souned joly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingers fyve,
Touche ay o streng or ay o werbul harpe,
Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,

It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle

149

Ne jompre eek no discordaunt thing y fere,
As thus, to usen termes of phisyk,
In loves termes, hold of thy matere
The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk,
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
With asses fee , and hede it as an ape,
It cordeth nought, so nere it but a jape"

150

This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus,
But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this —
'Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to wryte, y-wis,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde a mis,
Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve,
Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it no-thing
weyve."

151

To that Pandare answerde, ' if thee lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon,
For by that lord that formed est and west,
I hope of it to bringe answere anoon
Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon,
Lat be, and sory mote he been his lyve,
Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve"

152

Quod Troilus, "*Depardieux*, I assente,
Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte,
And blisful god preye ich, with good entente,
The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
So spede it, and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse '
And sette him doun, and wroot right in this
wyse —

153

First he gan hir his righte lady calle,

To telle al how, it axeth muchel space

154

And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
And pitously gan mercy for to crye,
And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
Him self was litel worth, and lesse he coude,

155

And that she sholde han his conning excused,
That litel was, and eek he dredde hir so,
And his unworthinesse he ay acused,
And after that, than gan he telle his wo,
But that was endeles, with-outen ho
And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde;—
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde

156

And with his salte teres gan he bathe

His music would but make men dull and sad
And only when he stopped would they be glad

149

150

Troilus thought this counsel very wise,
But timid lover that he was replied
Pandar alas I see what you advise,
But I m afraid to write I must confide!
Such letters I have never seen nor tried
And if she took amiss what I might say
Goodnight for me— twould be my fatal
day!

151

Don t balk " said Pandar go ahead and write,
And let me with your letter to her go
And by the Lord and his eternal might,

152

O Lord his poor friend answered I give in!
Since you insist I ll get up now and write!
May God help you your journey s end to win,

wise

153

Of course to tell you all I haven t space

154

Nor stopped with that ar piling it on high,
Himself of small account he did profess
And added that his deeds were worth still less

155

And then goodby, with pledges new and old
And so his letter ready was to fold

156

The ruby in his signet with his tears

He bathes, and when he hath it neatly set
Upon the wax, its impress there appears,
A thousand times then he did not forget
To kiss his missive with his kisses wet,
And said, "O letter, what a joy for thee!
Tomorrow thou my lady dear shalt see "

157

The letter in the morning Pandar took
To Cressida, as soon as he could start
"Are you awake," he cried, "let's have a look!"
And then he laughed and joked, and said, "My
heart
Remains so fresh, for all love makes it smart,
I cannot sleep on such a May time morrow!
I have a jolly woe, a lusty sorrow!"

158

Cressida greeted him with some surprise,
Eager to know, but also with some fear
Why he came there, she questions and replies,
"What lucky wind has brought you over
here
So early in the morning, uncle dear?
Tell us your jolly woe and your mischance!
What progress are you making in love's dance?"

159

"As ever," he said, "I'm limping far behind!"
At which she laughed as if her heart would burst.
"I hope,' said Pandar, "you will always find
Me cause for mirth! But listen to me first—
There's come a stranger to this town accursed,
A Grecian spy, and he great tidings brings—
I thought you'd like to hear about these things

160

"Let's go into the garden, you and I,
I'll tell you privately this latest news '
Then arm in arm, down from her chamber high
They walk into the garden cool, and choose
A quiet path where no one hears or views
The things they say or do, and thus concealed,
Pandar the precious letter straight revealed

161

[illegible]

[illegible]

Regard it well at fitting time and place,
And with your pen some goodly answer trace,
For now I tell you once for all and plain,
He cannot longer live in so great pain "

162

The letter she beheld, but stood quite still,
And took it not, till anger drove out fear,
And then she loudly cried, "Nor script nor bill,
For love of God, bring never to me here
From such a source! And also, uncle dear,
For my good name have more regard, I pray,
Than for your friend What need I further say?

163

"Pray tell me, do you in your heart believe,
For all your guileful words and cunning speech,
That I could properly this note receive,
Or put in practice what you seem to preach,
And both of *you so earnestly beseech,*

The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe;
Ther-with a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde, "lettre, a blisful destenee
Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see."

157

This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme
A-morwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryme,
And gan to jape, and seyde, "y-wis, myn
herte,
So fresh it is, al-though it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe,
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe."

158

Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde,
With dreedful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde,
"Now by your feyth, myn uncle," quod she,
"dere,
What maner windes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us your joly wo and your penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce "

159

"By god," quod he, "I hoppe alwey bihinde!"
And she to-laugh, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus, "loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow leste,
Ther is right now come in-to toune a geste,
A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
For which come I to telle yow tydinges

160

Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun "
With that they wenten arm in arm y-fere
In-to the gardin from the chaumbre doun
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte,

161

"Lo, he that is al hoolly youres free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me,
Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answere yow purchace,
Or, helpe me god, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne "

162

Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but al hir humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, "scrit ne bille,
For love of god, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon, and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust, what sholde I more seye?

163

And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth, now were it covenable
To myn estat, by god, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,

In harming of my-self or in repreve?
Ber it a-yein, for him that ye on leve!"

164

This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,
And seyde, "now is this the grettest wonder
That ever I sey! lat be this nyce fare!
To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder,
If, for the citee which that stondeth yonder,
Wolde I a lettre un-to yow bringe or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

165

But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve,
Of him ye recche leest wher he bicome,
And whether that he live or elles sterve
But for al that that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it nought," quod he, and hente hir faste,
And in hir bosom the lettre doun he thraste,

166

And seyde hir, "now cast it away anoon,
That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye"
Quod she, "I can abyde til they be goon,"
And gan to smyle, and seyde him, "eem, I preye,
Swich answere as yow list your-self purveye,
For trewely I nil no lettre write"
"No? than wol I," quod he, "so ye endyte"

167

Therwith she lough, and seyde, "go we dyne"
And he gan at him-self to jape faste,
And seyde, "nece, I have so greet a pyne
For love, that every other day I faste"—
And gan his beste japes forth to caste,
And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende for to dye

168

And whan that she was comen in-to halle,
"Now, eem," quod she, "we wol go dyne anoon";
And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
And streyght in-to hir chaumbre gan she goon,
But for hir besinesses, this was oon
A-monges othere thinges, out of drede,
Ful prively this lettre for to rede,

169

Avysed word by word in every lyne,
And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good,
[illegible]

170

Tho wesshen they, and sette hem doun and ete,
And after noon ful sleyly Pandarus
Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
And seyde, "nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant afor-yeyn us?"
"Which hous?" quod she, and gan for to biholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde,

171

And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
And seten in the window bothe tweye
Whan Pandarus saw tyme un-to his tale,

And not wreck all my good repute and fame?
Take it away, I bid in heaven's name!'

164

"Why, Cressida," he said, "you are quite droll!
Is this the first you've heard of this, I wonder!
Let Jove to depths infernal damn my soul,
Or strike me down with sudden stroke of thunder,
If for the town whose walls we're sitting under,
A harmful word to you I'd ever carry!
Your conduct seems to me extraordinary!

165

[illegible]

And all my good intentions you deny,
You shan't refuse" And then he seized her gown
And in her bosom thrust the letter down

166

"Now then," he said, "this note I dare you throw
Away, that folk may see your grand display!'
"O, I can wait," she said, "until you go!'
[illegible]

167

She laughed at this and said, "Let's go and dine!'
And he agreed, assured the worst was past,
And said, 'Dear niece, for love I peak and pine
[illegible]

168

[illegible]
so,"

169

She read it word by word and line by line,
[illegible]

170

And then they washed and set them down to eat.
[illegible]

171

And there they stayed and talked of this and that,
Both sitting down within the window bay,
But after much such unimportant chat,

And when her women all were gone away,
Then Pandar turned and said "Well niece I say,
How was the letter good or just so so?
How does he write? I'd really like to know"

172

At that she blushed a quick and rosy red
But merely answered "Hm! Of course you would"
"Now you must write a fair reply" he said
"I'll sew your letter up all tight and good
Across the middle if you say I should
And if you want just make your letter small
But let your uncle fold and sew it all"

173

"Perhaps I might" she murmured soft and slow,
"But if I should I don't know what to say!"
"O niece" said Pandar "such things quickly grow!
At least your grateful thanks you can convey
And say some words his trouble to repay
Indeed it's only decent courtesy
To grant at least so much to him and me"

174

"O dear" she said "I hope it's quite all right!
I never thought to write a man a letter
It really puts me in a nervous fright!
Into her room she went to work the better,
And there alone her heart she doth unfetter
Out of the prison of disdain a while
Striving a fitting letter to compile

175

And what she wrote in brief I mean to tell
So far as I have heard or understand
She thanked him first that he of her thought well,
But said she really could not take in hand
A serious answer to his chief demand
But as a sister if she could him please
She'd gladly do her best his heart to ease

176

She closed it then while Pandar mused alone,
Beside the window looking on the street
And brought it in and sat upon a stone
Of jasper by him on a cushion seat
With beaten gold embroidered fair and neat
And said "I've never done a harder thing
Than write this letter which to you I bring!

177

With thanks he took the letter and replied
"You know from things with heavy heart begun,
Come happy endings Niece you may take pride
That you by him have not been lightly won
For in the tale of sayings true the one
That says the truest runs 'Impressions light
Are always lightly ready to take flight'

178

"But you have played the tyrant nigh too long
And made your heart a hard thing to engrave
[illegible]

179

And as they sat thus friendly and confiding

And saw wel that hir folk were alle aweye,
"Now, nece myn, tel on," quod he, "I seye,
How lyketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Can he ther-on? for, by my trouthe, I noot"

172

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde, 'so I trowe"
"Aquyte him wel, for goddes love," quod he,
"My-self to medes wol the lettre sowe,"
And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe,
"Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte"

173

"Ye, for I can so wryte," quod she tho,
"And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye"
"Nay, nece," quod Pandare, "sey not so,
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this tyme my preyere"

174

"*Depar-dieux*," quod she, "god leve al be wel!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del"
And in to a closet, for to avyse hir bettre,
She wente allone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte,
And sette hir doun, and gan a lettre wryte,

175

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Th'effect, as fer as I can understonde —
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hir-selven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plese,
She wolde fayn, to doon his herte an ese

176

She shette it, and to Pandarus gan goon,
There as he sat and loked in to strete,
And doun she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of jaspre, up-on a quisshin gold y bete,
And seyde, 'as wisly helpe me god the grete,
I nevere dide a thing with more peyne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne".

177

And took it him he thonked hir and seyde,
"God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good, and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to him of hard now ben y-wonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne!
For why men seth, 'impressioun[e]s lighte
Ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte'

178

[illegible]
But hasteth yow to doon him joye have,
For trusteth wel, to longe y-doon hardnesse
Causeth despyt ful often, for distresse"

179

And right as they declamed this matere,

Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some y-fere,
Al softely, and thiderward gan bende
Ther as they sete, as was his wey to wende
To paleys-ward, and Pandare him aspyde,
And seyde, 'nece, y-see who cometh here ryde!

180

O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose,
Lest he may thinke that ye him eschuwe."
'*Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as reed as rose*.
With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe,
With dreedful chere, and ofte his hewes muwe,
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

181

God woot if he sat on his hors a-right,
Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!
God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
To telle in short, hir lyked al y-fere,
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

182

His goodly manere and his gentillesse,
So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse,
And how so she hath hard ben her-biforn,
To god hope I, she hath now caught a thorn.
She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke,
God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

183

Pandare, which that stood hir faste by,
Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde, 'nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte.
A womman, *that were of his deeth to wyte*,
With-outen his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe,
Were it wel doon?' Quod she, 'nay, by my trouthe!'

184

'God helpe me so," quod he, 'ye sey me sooth.
Ye felen wel your-self that I not lye;
Lo, yond he rit!' Quod she, 'ye, so he dooth.'
'Wel,' quod Pandare, 'as I have told yow thrye,
Lat be your nyce shame and your folye,
And spek with him in esing of his herte,
Lat nycetee not do yow bothe smerte."

185

But ther-on was to heven and to done,
Considered al thing, it may not be,
And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone
To graunten him so greet a libertee.
'For playnly hir entente,' as seyde she,
'Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
And guerdon him with no-thing but with sighte."

186

R p ... ...

Lo Troilus along the lower end
Came up the street with escort slowly riding
And by this very house they must ascend
As to the palace on their way they wend
Pandar at once beheld this fine array
Look niece he said who s riding up this way!

180

Don t go away—he sees us I suppose—

A gentle glance or two upon her cast
Nodded to Pandar and on his way he passed

181

O Troilus, he was a goodly sight
In goodly form he was that happy day!

182

So well indeed and by his gentleness

And Pandar who was standing there near by
Began to strike feeling the iron hot
Dear niece he said I wish you would untie
For me this simple little lovers knot!
If this man guiltless through some woman got
His death because her heart was hardened so
Were it well done? I d say, she answered no!

184

And you d say right with ardor Pandar cried
With proper spirit you are now imbued
Lo forth he rides! Says she Well let him ride!'
O come sa d Pandar don t be such a prude!

s ght

186

But Pandar thought O that will never do!
She must get over such a foolish notion
This matter can t run on a year or two
But for the present he was all devotion
And thought it best to raise no great commotion

And seeing all was well at fall of eve
He rose and said goodby and took his leave

187

And on his homeward way full fast he sped
And felt for very joy his heart must dance
Troilus he found extended on his bed

' Who s buried here in bed he cried so soon?
A faint voice issued forth It s only me '
Who? Troilus? Now by the sacred moon
Said Pandar get thee up and come and see
A wondrous charm that has been sent to thee
To heal thee from all irksome grief and pain
And make thee joyful brisk and spry again

189

' O yes a miracle said Troilus

On Troilus as he his letter read
For in her words he found both hope and dread

190

But in the end he took it for the best
And thought that in her letter she had said
Some things at least on which his heart could
rest
Although between the lines they must be read
And so to optimistic views thus led
And trusting too in Pandar as his friend
His deep despair began a bit to mend

191

And as we may ourselves on all sides see
The more the wood or coal the more the fire
As with increase of probability
There often comes an increase of desire
As oaks from acorns grow and mount up higher
So now this lover s flame more brightly burned
His head by just one little letter turned

192

And so it came to pass that day and night
Troilus began to hunger more and more
And as his hope increased with all his
might
He strove to put in practice Pandar s lore
In writing to her of his sorrows sore
Each day the effort new he made
In letters which by Pandar were conveyed

193

And echoing to the answers that he had
His days took color either glad or sad

194

And Pandar ever was his great recourse.

As for the tyme, and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve

187

And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for joye he felte his herte daunce,
And Troilus he fond alone a bedde,
That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce
But Pandarus, right at his in-cominge,
He song, as who seyth, ' lo! sumwhat I bringe "

188

And seyde, "who is in his bed so sone
Y buried thus? ' "It am I, freend," quod he
"Who, Troilus? nay helpe me so the mone,"
Quod Pandarus, "thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accesse,
If thou do forth with al thy besinesse "

189

"Ye, through the might of god! ' quod Troilus
And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde, "pardee, god hath holpen us,
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake "
But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede

190

But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for sumwhat he biheld
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte
reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo for yede he at the leste

191

But as we may alday our selven see,
Through more wode or col, the more fyr,
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr,
Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr,
So through this lettre, which that she him sente,
Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente

192

Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, and dide his
might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore
Fro day to day, he leet it not refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde,

193

And dide also his othere observaunces
That to a lovere longeth in this cas,
And, after that these dees turnede on chaunces,
So was he outher glad or seyde "allas! '
And held after his gestes ay his pas,
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde

194

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,

And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours,
And Pandarus, that sey his wode peyne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste,

195

And seyde, "lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disese doth me wo
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thou shalt come in to a certayn place,
Ther-as thou mayst thy-self hir preye of grace

196

st,

presse,

Paraunter thenkestow though it be so
That kinde wolde doon hir to biginne
To han a maner routhe up-on my wo,
Seyth Daunger, 'Nay, thou shalt me never winne,
So reuleth hir hir hertes goost with-inne,
That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote,
What in effect is this un-to my bote?'

198

Thenk here-ayeins, whan that the sturdy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,

ite,

And reed that boweth doun for every blast,
wol aryse,

e
twelve,
He shal thee ese, unwist of it him-selve

201

Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,"
Quod he, and to Deiphebus wente he tho
Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
Save Troilus, no man he lovede so
To telle in short, with-outen wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus, "I pray yow that ye be
Freend to a cause which that toucheth me."

the sole recipient,

it

195

and friend," he said, "and brother dear,

ase.

196

'I have no doubt this point is known to you,
But those who are expert in love declare
There's nothing like a personal interview
To help along a lagging love affair
Just make her of your state of mind aware,
For every gentle heart it must impress
To see and hear the guiltless in distress

197

think 'Though it may well be so,

oot

198

'But on the other hand, the sturdy oak,
On which have been delivered many a blow,
the happy falling stroke,

199

'A reed that lowly bows before the blast,
After the wind again will lightly rise
But not so when an oak tree down is cast—
Of course you see what this exemplifies.
One should take pleasure in an enterprise
Of pith and moment placed beyond a doubt,
Though it took time to bring it all about

200

Now, Troilus, I have a slight request,
A little thing that I must ask of thee
Which of thy brothers dost thou love the best
Within thy heart's most secret privacy?"
Deiphebus it is," at once said he.
Said Pandar, 'Ere another day shall end,
Unwittingly he shall thee well befriend!

201

'Leave it to me! I'll do the best I can!"
Then to Deiphebus he took his way,
was his lord and he his faithful man,

202
"O quite!" Deiphebus replied "You know,
There's not a man within this mortal sphere
[illegible]

203
[illegible]
As I have told in plain and simple speech

204
"Is she," he asked, "this lady in distress,
Of whom you speak in such a formal way,
My old friend Cressida?" Said Pandar "Yes"
"Why, then," he cried "there's nothing more to say!
For you can count on me in any fray
To champion her with sword or shaft or spear,
And this I'll say for all her foes to hear

205
[illegible]
Present her case, I m sure her enemies
Would hesitate to press their wicked pleas

206
"And one thing more you might consent to do—
[illegible]
For with your aid and that of other friends,
She'll check her foes and thwart their wicked ends"

207
Deiphebus, who was by nature kind,
[illegible]

208
[illegible]
To win him to her side Her only task
Will be, whatever she may want, to ask

209
"And you yourself might speak to Troilus,
On my behalf, and ask him here to dine"
"O gladly," Pandar said, "I shall do thus!"
He took his leave and straight as any line,
He fastened forth to further his design,

202
"Yis, pardee," quod Deiphebus, "wel thow wost,
In al that ever I may and god to-fore,
Al nere it but for man I love most,
My brother Troilus, but sey wherfore
It is, for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas, ne never-mo to been I thinke,
Ayeins a thing that mighte thee for-thinke.

203
Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde,
"Lo, sire, I have a lady in this toun,
[illegible]

204
Deiphebus him answerde, "O, is not this,
[illegible]
I roughte nought though alle hir foos it herde.

205
[illegible]
Com un-to yow hir pleyntes to devyse,
Hir adversaries wolde of hit agryse.

206
And if I more dorste preye as now,
And chargen yow to have so greet travayle,
To han som of your bretheren here with yow,
That mighten to hir cause bet avayle,
Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle
For to be holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with hir othere freendes governaunce."

207
Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde,
[illegible]
For she may leden Paris as hir leste

208
Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother,
[illegible]

209
Spek thou thy-self also to Troilus
[illegible]

He com, and fond hir fro the mete aryse,
And sette him doun, and spak right in this wyse

210

He seyde, 'O veray god, so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete?
I noot whether ye the more thank me conne
Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete
Is now aboute eft sones for to plete,
And bringe on yow advocacyës newe? '
"I? no," quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe

211

' What is he more aboute, me to drecche
And doon me wrong? what shal I do, allas?
Yet of him self no-thing ne wolde I recche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That been his freendes in swich maner cas,
But, for the love of god, myn uncle dere,
No fors of that, lat him have al y fere,

212

And shortly maked eche of hem his fo,
That, by my thrift, he shal it never winne
For ought he can, whan that so he biginne "

213

And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus, of his owene curtasye,
Com hir to preye, in his propre persone,

214

Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up a noon,
To telle in short, *and forth gan for to wende*
To Troilus, as stille as any stoon,
And al this thing he tolde him, word and ende,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende,
And seyde him, ' now is tyme, if that thou conne,
To bere thee wel to-morwe, and al is wonne

215

Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne,
Lat not for nyce shame, or drede, or slouthe,
Som tyme a man not telle his owene peyne,
Bileve it, and she shal han on thee routhe,
Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in trouthe
But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede,
And what it is, I leye, I can arede

216

Thow thinkest now, 'how sholde I doon al this?
For by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
That for hir love is that I fare a mis,
Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye '
Now thenk not so, for thou dost greet folye
For right now have I founden o manere
Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy chere

217

Thow shalt gon over night, and that as blyve,
Un to Deiphebus hous, as thee to pleye,
Thy maladye a wey the bet to dryve,

To Cressida whose dinner just was finished
And straight began with ardor undiminished

210

O Lord said he O what a way I ve run!
Look niece! Just gaze at what a sweat I m in!
I hope I ll have your thanks for all I ve done.
You know that Poliphete that man of sin
Is planning a new action to begin
And open up fresh charges in your case?"
I? No! she cried and grew pale in the face.

211

What will he never cease me to torment
And do me wrong? Alas what shall I do!
For him alone I wouldn t care a cent
But there s Antenor and Aeneas, too
Both friends of his—in all a wicked crew!
But I am weary uncle of this strife
I d give up all to have a peaceful life—

212

A very little will suffice for us!
No no said Pandar I won t have it so!
But I ve been talking with Deiphebus
And Hector, and with other lords you know,
And Poliphete will find in each a foe
I pledge my word this case he shall not win,
No matter when or what he may begin

213

And as they sat cons dering this affair
Deiphebus himself most graciously
In his own person came to see her there,
And ask the favor of her company
To dine next day To this she did agree
As proper was her lord thus to obey
And he expressed his thanks and went his way

214

Then Pandar left her with her thoughts alone,
For now on Troilus he must attend
And while his friend sat still as any stone
He told him all the tale from start to end
How unawares Deiphebus would lend
His aid and said to him 'Now if you can,
Is time to stir yourself and play the man!

215

Speak up tomorrow beg beseech and pray,
And don t hold back for fear or modesty!

216

Perhaps you think How shall I do all this?

217

To your dear brother s house I bid you go
And say that you have come a while to stay,
And that by illness you ve been troubled so,

But think a change may drive it all away

218

219

"In truth," said Troilus, "there is no need
To counsel me a sickness to pretend,
For I am sick in very fact and deed,
So sick it well may be my fatal end"
"That's good," said Pandar, "no time need you spend
On how to counterfeit the sick man's lot,
For one who sweats, is taken to be hot

220

"Just hold you steady in your snug retreat,

221

With cordial welcome there he was received,
Deiphebus expressing sympathy,
And at his illness all were deeply grieved,

bed

222

Before they from the sick man's room descend,

223

224

218

Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take
The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe,
And lat see now how wel thou canst it make,

219

Quod Troilus

pleyne,
And hast the lasse nede to countrefete,
For him men demen hoot that men seen swete.

220

Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer un-to thy bowe dryve."

221

What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus un-to his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his sykliche manere,
How men gan him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde him glade?
But al for nought, he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this devyse.

222

223

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meel-tyd, that the faire quene Eleyne
Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme,

224

Come eek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also,
But flee we now prolixitee best is,

225
Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that mighte lyke.
But ever-more, "allas!" was his refreyn,
[illegible]
. . . .
.
. . .

226
Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse
So feithfully, that pitee was to here,
And every wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anoon, and seyde, "in this manere
Men curen folk, this charme I wol yow lere"
But there sat oon, al list hir nought to teche,
That thoughte, best coude I yet been his leche.

227
After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet, whan som wight hath bigonne
To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse
A thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne —
"He is, he can, that fewe lordes conne"
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He not for-gat hir preysing to conferme

228
Herde al this thing Criseyde wel y-nough,
[illegible]
. . . .
.
. .
.
.

229
The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse,
And, as hem oughte, arisen everychoon,
And gonne a whyl of this and that devyse
But Pandarus brak al this speche anoon,
And seyde to Deiphebus, "wole ye goon,
If yourë wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?"

230
Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held,
Took first the tale, and seyde, "go we blyve"·
And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,
And seyde, "Joves lat him never thryve,
That dooth yow harm, and bringe him sone of lyve!
And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe,"

231
"Tel thou thy neces cas," quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, "for thou canst best it telle"—
"My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus,
What solde I lenger," quod he, "do yow dwelle?"
He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle,
Up-on hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
So hëynous, that men mighte on it spete.

232
Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
"An honged be swich oon, were he my brother,
And so he shal, for it ne may not varien."

225
Deiphebus his guests doth entertain
With most delicious foods, the very pick,
But now and then, "Alas," was his refrain,
'That Troilus in bed is lying sick!"
Yet to this theme he did not always stick,
But often spoke of things more bright and cheery,
To keep his honored guests from growing weary

226
And Helen, too, was really very nice
In warm expression of her sympathy,
And each one had some medical advice
To give—"I think the best treatment would be"—
'This charm indeed I recommend to thee"—
But to this lore that one made no addition
Who thought, "'Tis I could be his best physician."

227
And then his praises they began to sing,
As folk will do when someone has begun,
A thousand variations there they ring
Upon this theme, and praise him to the sun,
'What he can do, there's mighty few have done!'
And all the flattering things of him they say,
Pandar confirms in most emphatic way

228
Cressida heard, although she took no part,
And every syllable she kept in mind,
[illegible]

229
The time came from the table to arise,
And thus they stood about, while each one spoke
By chance of one or other enterprise,
Till on the conversation Pandar broke
And said "Deiphebus, to all this folk,
May I now beg you somewhat to declare
Of Cressida's unfortunate affair?"

230
And Helen, holding Cressida's right hand,
Spoke first "O, do! ' with sympathy she cried,
As side by side together there they stand
'By Jupiter, an evil fate betide
The wretches who to injure you have tried!
For sure, if I have anything to say,
They'll see good reason to regret the day"

231
"You state the case," remarked Deiphebus
To Pandar, "since you know it all so well"
'My lords and ladies all, it standeth thus,
No need," he said, "too long on it to dwell"—
Then rang them out a story like a bell
About this Poliphete, and made it stretch
So far, they felt like spewing on the wretch.

232
They all abused him, each worse than the other,
And right and left the scoundrel they did curse
"He should and shall be hanged, were he my brother!"
"And that's too good, if anything were worse.

But why should I a lengthy tale rehearse?
For each and all assured her in the end,
They'd do their best and be her staunchest friend

233

"O Pandar," Helen said, pray tell to us,
Is my good lord and brother—Hector I mean—
Informed of this affair? And Troilus?"
"Why, yes," he said, "but that reminds me, queen!
It seems to me, if Troilus can be seen,
It might be best, that is, if all assent
If she herself saw him before she went

234

"For he will have the matter more at heart,
If he should know the lady in the case,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
"God bless thy soul, I've brought thy pillow
here!"

235

This joke drew forth a smile from Troilus,
And Pandar, lacking cause for long delay,
Went back to Helen and Deiphebus,
And said, 'If she can come now right away,
But with no crowd, then come, he says, she may,
And he will hear what it is all about,
As long as he is able to hold out

236

'But since you know the chamber is but small,
And people crowding in might make it hot,
I would not have the blame on me to fall
[illegible]
[illegible]

237

"But still, I think 'twill be the better plan
For none to go in first except you two,
And maybe me who in a second can
Rehearse her case better than she can do,
And when you leave him, she can follow you
And ask for his support at no great length—
I don't think this will overtax his strength

238

"Then, too, since she is strange, he might exert
[illegible]

239

And Helen, always gently soft and sweet,
Began with him to chat and lightly play,
[illegible]

240

"We've come," she said, 'to ask some help from you,

What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleynly, alle at ones, they hir highten,
To been hir helpe in al that ever they mighten.

233

Spak than Eleyne, and seyde, "Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord, my brother, this matere,
I mene, Ector? or woot it Troilus?"
He seyde, "ye, but wole ye now me here?
Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hir-self him al this, er she wente.

234

For he wole have the more hir grief at herte,
By cause, lo, that she a lady is;
And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte,
And do yow wite, and that anoon, y-wis,
If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this."
And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere,
"God have thy soule, y-brought have I thy
bere!"

235

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, with-oute rekeninge,
Out wente anoon t'Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem, "so there be no taryinge,
Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe
Criseÿda, my lady, that is here,
And as he may enduren, he wole here.

236

But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warm,
Now loketh ye, (for I wol have no wyte,
To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm
Or him disesen, for my bettre arm),
Wher it be bet she byde til eft-sones,
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

237

I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I can, in a throwe,
Reherce hir cas, unlyk that she can seye,
And after this, she may him ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve;
This may not muchel of his ese him reve.

238

And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that him thar nought for yow;
Eek other thing, that toucheth not to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now,
That secret is, and for the tounes prow"
And they, that no-thing knewe of this entente,
With-oute more, to Troilus in they wente.

239

[illegible]
And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye,
And him with al hir wit to recomforte,
As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.

240

So after this quod she, "we yow biseke,

My dere brother, Deiphebus, and I,

241

This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle,
And al hir cas reherce, and that anoon,
Whan it was seyd, sone after, in a whyle,

242

Quod Pandarus, "and it your wille be,
That she may take hir leve, er that she go?"
' Or elles god for bede," tho quod he,
' If that she vouche sauf for to do so '
And with that word quod Troilus, 'ye two
Deiphebus and my suster leef and dere,
To yow have I to speke of o matere

243

To been avysed by your reed the bettre" —
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed,
The copie of a tretis and a lettre,
That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed,
If swich a man was worthy to ben deed,
Woot I nought who, but in a grisly wyse
He preyede hem anoon on it avyse

244

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde

245

Now lat hem rede, and turne we anoon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye
That al was wel, and out he gan to goon
In to the grete chambre, and that in hye,
And seyde, god save al this companye!
Com, nece myn, my lady quene Eleyne
Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne

246

hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly
Your tyme y see, taketh of hem your leve,
Lest we to longe his restes him bireve

247

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,

My brother dear Deiphebus and I
For love of—O and so does Pandar too —
To be a friend to one whom we hold high
To Cressida who no one can deny
Has been much wronged and Pandar over there,
Her case and situation can declare

241

242

Perhaps said Pandar if you can her see

A matter of importance I have here

243

I know not whose and with some agitation
He begged them give it their consideration

244

Deiphebus first hastens to unfold
The letter and then together with the queen
Downstairs he goes a conference to hold
And in a little quiet arbor green
They talk the matter out themselves between
And for an hour s span or less *or more,*
This document they read and on it pore

245

So let them read and let us turn again
To Pandar now so jubilant to find
How well all went He hastened out and when
He came into the room where they had dined
He cried 'To all of you may heaven be kind!
But come my niece Queen Helen waits for you,
And both *our gracious lords are waiting* too

246

Just take with you your niece Antigone
Or whom you will—or rather come alone,
The less the crowd the better Come now with me

247

Of Pandar s dark des gn all innocent
Cressida said ' Come uncle let us go!

248

pain!

248

Aviseth yow what falk ben here with-inne,

Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this peyne!

249

'Defy the devil! Keep Troilus in mind,
And in what state he lies! Don't sit so tight!
A chance once lost you never again will find
You'll both be glad when you give up the fight.
There's no suspicion yet, however slight,
About you two, and count it time well won
When all the world is blind to what is done

249

Fy on the devel! thenk which oon he is,
And in what plyt he lyth, com of anoon;
Thenk al swich taried tyd, but lost it nis!
That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon
Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon
Up-on yow two, com of now, if ye conne;
Whyl folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!

250

"In hesitations, false starts and delays,
Men read deep meanings from a wagging straw.
For you at last are coming merry days,
Yet you hold back and timidly withdraw,
And of vain gossip stand in such great awe,
You waste the time you never can recover
Have pity now upon this sorrowing lover!"

250

In titering, and pursuite, and delayes,
The folk devyne at wagginge of a stree,
And though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
Than dar ye nought, and why? for she, and she
Spak swich a word, thus lokd he, and he,
Lest tyme I loste, I dar not with yow dele,
Com of therfore, and bringeth him to hele "

251

His time was come now for her love to pray,
And, mighty God, what shall he do and say!

251

And was the firste tyme he shulde hir preye
Of love, O mighty god, what shal he seye?

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND BOOK

BOOK III

HERE BEGINNETH THE PROEM TO THE THIRD BOOK

1

1

O BLISFUL light, of whiche the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene faire!
O sonnes leef, O Joves doughter dere,
Pleasaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!
O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,
Y-heried be thy might and thy goodnesse!

2

In heaven and hell, on earth and salty sea,
All creatures answer to thy might supernal,
For man, bird, beast, fish, herb and leafy tree,

2

3

Mover of Jove to that so happy end,
Through which all earthly creatures live and be,
When mortal love upon him thou didst send,
For as thou wilt, the power lies with thee

3

Ye Joves first to thilke effectes glade,
Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
Comeveden, and amorous him made
On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye

Yeve him in love ese or adversitee,
And in a thousand formes doun him sente
For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he hente

4

Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,
And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne,
Algates, hem that ye wol sette a fyre,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne,
Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne,
And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth,
The joyes that he hath, your might him sendeth

5

Ye holden regne and hous in unitee,
Ye soothfast cause of frendship been also,
Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
Whan they can not construe how it may jo,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here,
As why this fish, and nought that, cometh to were

6

Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse
Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
At reverence of hem that serven thee,
Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
Som joye of that is felt in thy servyse

7

Ye in my naked herte sentement
Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse —
Caliope, thy vois be now present,

To which gladnes, who nede hath,
God him bringe!

Of ease in love or love's adversity,
And in a thousand forms is thy descent
On earth, in love to favor or prevent!

4

Fierce Mars for thee must subjugate his ire,
All hearts from thee receive their fates condign,
Yet ever when they feel thy sacred fire
In dread of shame, their vices they resign
And gentler grow, more brave and more benign,
And high or low, as each in his rank strives,
All owe to thee the joys of all their lives

5

As when in puzzlement, one seeks to know,
Why this loves that, why she by him is sought,
Why one and not the other fish is caught

6

From thee comes law for all the universe,
And this I know as all true lovers see,
That who opposeth, ever hath the worse
Now lady bright in thy benignity,
Help me to honor those who honor thee,
And teach me, clerk of love, that I may tell
The joy of those who in thy service dwell

7

May God all lovers to such
gladness bring!

HERE ENDETH THE PROEM TO THE THIRD BOOK

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD BOOK

8

Lay al this mene whyle Troilus,
Recordinge his lessoun in this manere,
"Ma fey! thought he, "thus wole I seye and thus,
Thus wole I pleyne un to my lady dere,
That word is good, and this shal be my chere,
This nil I not foryeten in no wyse"
God leve him werken as he gan devyse

9

And lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!
And Pandarus, that ladde hir by the lappe,
Com neer, and gan in at the curtin pyke,
And seyde, "god do bote on alle syke!
See, who is here yow comen to visyte,
Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte"

10

Ther with it semed as he wepte almost,
"A ha"

8

Now all this time poor Troilus still lay
Conning his lesson most industriously,
I think he planned just so and so I'll say,

9

10

With tearful weeping Pandar's eyes o'erflow,

'What, you, my dear! Alas that I can't rise
And do you honor in a fitting wise"

11

He raised him up, but she at once drew nigh,
Her two restraining hands on him to lay
"O, please," she cried, "for my sake please don't try!
(O, what was that I had in mind to say!)
Sir, here I come for two things, if I may,
To thank you first, then ask you as my lord
Your favor and protection to accord"

12

Hearing his lady to him humbly pray
For lordship, Troilus from shame near dead,
Had not a single word to her to say,
For he could think of none to save his head,
But suddenly he flushed a crimson red,
And all the clever things he'd counted on,
Fled from his mind, completely lost and gone.

13

Cressida understood this well enough
For she was wise, and liked him none the less
Because he was not pert or quick and rough,
Nor yet so bold he lacked all humbleness
But when his shame had passed its first excess,
His words, as in my way they can be told,
And as the old books say, I shall unfold

14

With strange and trembling voice, from simple dread
Abashed, and blushing now from ear to ear,
But changing often too, now pale, now red,
To Cressida, his chosen lady dear,
Submissive standing at his side so near—
Lo, all he said when he his lips could part,
Was, twice, "O mercy, mercy, my sweetheart!"

15

[illegible]

Until they dig my grave and put me in!
And though I'm slow of speech and hesitate,
My love by that you must not estimate.

16

"So much at present, O thou woman true,
[illegible]

17

Such manly sorrow in his bosom burned,
Tears from a heart of stone it would have drawn,
[illegible]

And slay us both, and on your ways then wend!'

18

"What's that?" cried she, "I know not for my part
Just what it is you're asking me to say!'
"What's that?' he said, "just show you have a heart,

"Ye, swete herte? allas, I may nought ryse
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse"

11

And dressede him upward, and she right tho
Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye,
"O, for the love of god, do ye not so
To me," quod she, "ey! what is this to seye?
Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
First, yow to thonke, and of your lorshipe eke
Continuaunce I wolde yow biseke."

12

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.
But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.

13

Criseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough,
For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse,
[illegible]

I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.

14

In chaunged vois, right for his verrey drede,
Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look doun cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, th'alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, "mercy, mercy, swete herte!"

15

And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe,
The nexte word was, "god wot, for I have,
As feythfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youres, also god my sowle save,
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be grave
And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne,
Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.

16

Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese.
But sin that ye han herd me som-what seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye."

17

Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe,
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde,
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde, "wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
For love of god, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende."

18

"I? what?" quod she, "by god and by my trouthe,
I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye"
"I? what?" quod he, "that ye han on him routhe,

For goddes love, and doth him nought to deye "
"Now thanne thus, quod she, "I wolde him preye
To telle me the fyn of his entente,
Yet wiste I never wel what that he mente "

19

"What that I mene, O swete herte dere?"
Quod Troilus, "O goodly fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde som tyme freendly on me see,
And thanne agreën that I may ben he,
With-oute braunche of vyce in any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse

20

As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence,
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence
And that ye deigne me so muche honoure,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre

21

And I to been your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, *this mene I, myn owene swete herte* "

22

Quod Pandarus, "lo, here an hard request,
And resonable, a lady for to werne!

23

Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swich forme as he can now devyse,
Receyven him fully to my servyse,

24

Bisechıng him, for goddes love, that he
Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentilesse,
As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,

25

But nathelees, this warne I yow, ' quod she,
"A kinges sone al though ye be, y wis,
Ye shul na more have soverainetee
Of me in love, than right in that cas is,
Ne I nil forbere if that ye doon a mis,
To wrathen yow, and whyl that ye me serve,
Cheryssen yow right after ye deserve

26

And shortly, derē herte and al my knight,

19

' Just what I have in mind O sweetheart dear! '
Cried Troilus That thou so fair to see

20

As rightful lady and my chief resort,
With all my wit and all my diligence
And as you will may have from you support
According as you judge my competence—
Or death for any disobedience—
And that this honor you to me will show,
To seek my aid in all things high or low

21

And let me be your servant sworn and true,
Humble and secret patient in endeavor
Eager to find occasions fresh and new
To serve and in my service slacken never,
And what you will and bid receiving ever
With good intent however sore I smart—
Lo this I have in mind *my own sweetheart!* '

22

To such a man so faithfully approved
By whom the hardest heart might well be moved! '

23

Though Cressida would not be pushed too fast
Yet in a manner not at all severe
A glance or two on Troilus she cast
And answered soberly and plain and clear
Saving my honor which I hold most dear,
With all formalities observed and kept
This man into my service I accept

24

25

With his he yet also as you knightly serve,
Shall cherish you and praise as you deserve

26

In short dear heart and now my worthy knight

Rejoice and put aside your fear and dread,
For truly I shall strive with all my might,
For bitter days to give you sweet instead,
And if through me to joy you can be led,
For each past woe you shall receive a bliss"—
And sealed her words with an embrace and kiss.

27

Methinks in all the town, with no hand swinging,
To mark this miracle, the bells are ringing!

28

'But soft! we'll wait until another day,
Because Deiphebus will come back soon—
And hark, I hear them coming up this way
But, Cressida, some morn or afternoon,
And Troilus too, at season opportune,
A meeting at my house I shall arrange,
The remnant of your pledges to exchange,

29

30

With these words, Helen and Deiphebus
Appear, as they the topmost stairs ascend,
And now again deep groans from Troilus
Burst forth, as he bethinks him illness to pretend;
But Pandar says, "It's time for us to end
Our visit, niece, so take leave of all three,
And let them talk, and you come on with me"

31

She said goodbye in quite the proper way,
And they in turn, in polished manner, too,

32

Now to her palace let her wend her way

He thought perhaps it might for him be best
To try to sleep and get a little rest

33

And Helen kissed him then and said goodby,

Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my might,
Your bittre tornen al in-to swetnesse,
If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse",
And him in armes took, and gan him kisse

27

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his yën
To hevene threw, and held his hondes hye,
"Immortal god!" quod he, "that mayst nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye,
And Venus, thou mayst make melodye,
With-outen hond, me semeth that in towne,
For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.

28

But ho! no more as now of this matere,
For-why this folk wol comen up anoon,
That han the lettre red lo, I hem here.
But I conjure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
And two, thou Troilus, whan thow mayst goon,
That at myn hous ye been at my warninge,
For I ful wel shal shape your cominge;

29

And eseth ther your hertes right y-nough,
And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love a-right!" ther-with he lough
"For ther have ye a layser for to telle"
Quod Troilus, "how longe shal I dwelle
Er this be doon?" Quod he, "whan thou mayst ryse,
This thing shal be right as I yow devyse"

30

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyres ende;
And lord, so than gan grone Triolus,
His brother and his suster for to blende
Quod Pandarus, "it tyme is that we wende,
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me"

31

She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Un-to the fulle diden hardely,
And speken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
Hir governaunce, hir wit, and hir manere
Commendeden, it joye was to here

32

Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place,
And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde, that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste

33

Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight,
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,
To tale, and wel was hem they were y-fere,

34

When every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste y-shette,
To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, with-outen any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse

35

"Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore,
When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere,
For love, of which thy wo wex alwey more,
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Hath ever sithen doon my bisinesse
To bringe thee to joye out of distresse,

36

And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorugh me, thow stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no bost,
And wostow why? for shame it is to seye,
For thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother

37

That is to seye, for thee am I bicomen,
Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a mene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen,
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene
For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentilesse triste,
That al shal been right as thy-selve liste

38

But god, that al wot, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for coveityse wroughte,
But only for to abregge that distresse,
For which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte
But gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
For goddes love, and keep hir out of blame,
Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name

39

For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is,
For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That ever wiste that she dide amis
But wo is me, that I, that cause
al this,
May thenken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eem, and traytor eek y-fere!

40

And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
Hadde in my nece y-put this fantasye,
To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
Why, al the world up-on it wolde crye,
And seye, that I the worste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne

41

Wher-fore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
That privetee go with us in this cas,
That is to seye, that thou us never wreye,

34

When all had left the room except these two,
And firmly shut and barred was every door,
Their conversation they began anew,
And Pandar left his couch upon the floor,
And on the bed he sat, and now once more
Began to speak in his accustomed way
To Troilus, as I shall to you say.

35

"My lord most worshipful and brother dear,
God knows, and thou, what pain and grief I bore
To see thee languishing through all the year
For love that ever the longer grew the more!
Thus I with all my might and all my lore
Did ever since my time for you employ
To bring you back from sorrow into joy,

36

'And have so far my plannings carried out
That you to gain your end are in good way.
But there is nothing here to boast about,
And know you why? With shame I must it say,
For you I have begun a game to play,
The like of which I'd do for no one other,
Although he were a thousandfold my brother

37

"That is to say, I've made myself for thee
Half jest, half earnest, such a go-between
As oft twixt man and maid the world doth see
You know yourself what kind of thing I mean,
For thee I've made my niece, so pure and clean,
Such confidence and trust on thee bestow
That henceforth all just as thou wilt shall go

38

'But God omniscient here I witness take,
For private ends in this I have not wrought,
But only strove thy sufferings to slake,
Which well nigh fatal were, or so I thought
But, brother dear, remember that you ought,
In every manner, keep her free from blame,
And always strive to save her honest name

39

'For well you know a woman's reputation
Among the people is a sacred thing,
And never man, I dare make affirmation,
A charge of wrong on her could justly bring,
But now the dreadful thought my heart doth
wring,
That she should be my niece, so dear to me,
And I her uncle and her pimp should be.

40

'And were it known that I, through set design,
Had put my dearest niece in such a way
To follow thee and be all wholly thine,
Why, all the world would cry aloud and say,
That no such treachery for many a day
Was in this fashion planned and done,
And she be lost, and for thee nothing won!

41

And so before a further step we take,
No matter what befall, I ask again
For secrecy, for hers and for my sake;
Do not disgrace me in the eyes of men!

And be not wroth at me if now and then
I beg for privacy in this affair
For well you know how urgent is my prayer

42

This proverb useful to the old and young
The highest virtue is to hold your tongue

43

And if I would not now abbreviate
Diffusiveness in speech I could almost
A thousand ancient tales to you relate
Of women lost through false and foolish boast
Such proverbs you yourself must know a host,
All boastful blabbers are but fools forsooth
Even if what they say seems l ke the truth

44

proof
Boasters by nature are from truth aloof

45

A boaster and a liar all is one!
For no v suppose a woman granteth me
Her love as to no other she hath done
And I am sworn to sacred secrecy
And then I go and talk to two or three
Then I m a boaster and a liar both
For I have broken all my plighted troth

46

I ask you is it any wonder then
That women fear to get involved with men?

47

I don t say this especially of you—
I hope you re not in need of all I ve said
I m thinking of the harm that people do
By heedlessness and not by malice led
For well I know no woman need to dread
The vice of boasting in a man of sense
The wise learn from the fools to shun offence

48

But to the point! Now my good brother dear
Keep all these things that I have said in mind
And ponder well But now be of good cheer

49

I have no doubt of thy integrity,

And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preye
To holden secree swich an heigh matere,
For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere

42

And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
For makinge of avauntes, as men rede,
And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede,
For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
Han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
That 'firste vertu is to kepe tonge '

43

And, nere it that I wilne as now t'abregge
Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
A thousand olde stories thee alegge
Of wommen lost, thorugh fals and foles bost,
Proverbes canst thy self y nowe, and wost,
Ayeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe

44

O tonge, allas! so often here biforn
Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe
Seyd, 'welawey! the day that I was born!'
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe,
And, for the more part, al is untrewe
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to
preve
Of kinde non avauntour is to leve

45

Avauntour and a lyere, al is on,
As thus I pose, a womman graunte me
Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And after I go telle it two or three,
Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste

46

Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk, what shal I clepe hem, what,

Though wommen drede with us men to dele

47

For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed,
For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed

48

I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And god to-forn, that it shall thee suffyse,
For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse

49

For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde,

Therfore I dar this fully undertake
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make
How now good night, I may no lenger wake,
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That god me sende deeth or sone lisse '

50

Who mighte telle half the joye or feste
Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte,
Heringe th'effect of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for joye wasten and to-melte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more

51

But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye,
Wex sodeynliche his herte ful of joye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye

52

And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
Ful sobrely, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, freend, in Aprille the laste,

53

Thou wost how longe I it for bar to seye
To thee, that art the man that I best triste,
And peril was it noon to thee by wreye,

54

As I am mortal if I late or yerne
Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne,
For all the good that god made under sonne,

55

Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere
To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here

56

And that thou hast so muche y doon for me,
That I ne may it never more deserve,
This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve,
I can no more, that that I wol thee serve
Right as thy sclave, whider so thou wende,
For ever more, un to my lyves ende!

And therefore all this task I undertake
Thou knowest that thy lady grants to thee
A day on which thy settlement to make!
And now goodnight! I cannot keep awake
And pray for me since heaven doth thee bless
God send me death or make my sorrow less!

50

Now who could tell one half the jubilation
Which Troilus within his heart then felt

51

52

Then Troilus his eye on Pandar cast,
Most soberly yet in a friendly way
And said O friend remember April last
For I am sure you can t forget the day,
How nearly mortal sorrow did me slay,
And how you long and earnestly did press
Me there to tell the cause of my distress?

53

You know how long to speak I then forbore,
Although you were the man I trusted best

And tremble now with no one by to hear?

54

But by the God omnipotent I swear
By him who deals to every man his fate
And if I lie may not Achilles spare
T

55

The rather would I end my days withal
Fettered in prison cell would rather be
In wretchedness where filthy vermin crawl
In Agamemnon s harsh captivity
And this in all our temples faithfully
By all our Gods tomorrow I will swear
And you can go along and witness bear

56

57

"But let me now with all my heart beseech
That you assign me no such attribute,

I've learned a thing or two outside of school

58

Between two things a good deal similar

59

"And here's another thing that I declare
To wipe from all your act the shameful blot,
Behold my sister Polyxena fair,

60

"But since thou hast helped me in this wise

61

Thus each with other was well satisfied,
No better friends in all the world could be;

62

And every reckless action to restrain
With manly will, and each unbridled look,
There was no man alive could entertain
The least suspicion, such good care he took
That none might nose him out by hook or crook
He held himself as lonely as a cloud,
From policy, and not that he was proud

63

And all this time of which I now relate,
He daily strove with valor and with might
The service high of Mars to cultivate
In deeds of arms befitting a true knight,
And on his couch when darkness followed light
He lay, and thought how he might serve
His lady best, and thus her thanks deserve

64

57

But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
That never in me thou deme swich folye
As I shal seyn, me thoughte, by thy speche,
That this, which thou me dost for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be,
It is not so, that woot I wel, pardee.

58

But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
On swich message, calle him what thee list;
And this that thou dost, calle it gentilesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
Departe it so, for wyde-where is wist
How that there is dyversitee requered
Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered

59

And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
That this servyse a shame be or jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she never so faire or wel y-shape,
Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone

60

But sin that thou hast don me this servyse,
My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
So, for the love of god, this grete empryse
Parforme it out, for now is moste nede.
For high and low, with-outen any drede,
I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe,
Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe"

61

Thus held him ech with other wel apayed,
That al the world ne mighte it bet amende,
And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,
Ech to his owene nedes gan entende
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
For sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
He not for-gat his gode governaunce

62

What that he mente, as touching this matere.
From every wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he coude.

63

64

Nil I nought swere, al though he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed,
But in swich cas man is nought alwey plesed,

For ought I wot, no more than was he,
That can I deme of possibilitee

65

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
He say his lady som tyme, and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede

66

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich
fere,
Lest any wyght divynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende

67

But thilke litel that they speke or wroughte,

68

And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked god she ever with him mette,
So coude he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne mighte it bet devyse

69

For why she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obeïsaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
Of steel, and sheld from every displesaunce,
That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
So wys he was, she was no more afered,
I mene, as fer as oughte ben requered

70

And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,

71

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde

… or every look, to poynte

72

For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene,

So I ve been told —and so thought he maybe
I note it as a possibility

65

66

And when they spoke they spoke so quick and
brief
With great reserve and with oppressive fear
(For folk are prone to jump at some belief
And strain to gather something through the ear)
That all would think that nothing was so dear
To them as this that Cupid should them send
An opportunity their speech to end

67

In short to bring the matter to a close,
So faithfully he did on her attend
That high in his dear lady s grace he rose,
And twenty thousand times or more on end
She thanked the Lord that she had such a friend,
Who could conduct himself in all his ways
So well he merited the highest praise

69

In truth she found him so discreet withal,
So secret ever and obedient

I mean of course no more than necessary

70

And Pandar ready still to feed the fire,
Was ever diligent and close at hand
To please his friend was now his sole des re,
He urged him on was ready at command
To carry letters or for him to stand
When Troilus was busy or away—
In short the perfect confidant to play

71

I couldn t do it if I took a year
To tell you every passage of his wooing
Would be a labor scarcely worth the doing

72

I do not find that ever anyone
In telling such details has been minute—

'Twould be appalling if it were all done!
In letters thousands of verses I compute
They wrote, on which my author is quite mute;
He was too sensible and wise to try
To write all lovers say, and so am I

73

But to the great result! As things stood thus,
These two in concord and in peace complete,
These lovers Cressida and Troilus,
[illegible]

74

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
His niece so dear, and his still dearer friend,
That at their leisure they might there attend
To this great love by which they both were bound,
And finally a fitting time he found

75

He made his plans with great deliberation,
Providing for all things that might avail
To help them realize their expectation,
However great the toil this might entail,
And worked it out so that it could not fail,
And that for anyone through it to see,
Would be a sheer impossibility

76

To fool all folk his plan was well designed,
The spoil sports and the gossips, all the same,
He had no doubts, for all the world is blind,
In such affairs, the wild ones and the tame!
And now the timbers ready are to frame!
There's nothing lacking now except to know
The hour at which to his house she should go

77

And Troilus, who all this plotting knew,
[illegible]
That to a certain temple he would go,
His duty to the deity to show,

78

[illegible]
flee,
And therefore let him as he will pretend,
And pray Apollo bring all to good end.

79

And now we're coming to the point right soon!
For Pandar up and with no great ado,
[illegible]

And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis;
For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?

73

But to the grete effect' than sey I thus,
That stonding in concord and in quiete
Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often mighte they not mete,
Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle,

74

That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here.
As for to bringe to his hous som night
His faire nece, and Troilus y-fere,
Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere,
Touching hir love, were at the fulle up-bounde,
Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.

75

For he with greet deliberacioun
Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle
Forn-cast, and put in execucioun,
And neither laft for cost ne for travayle;
Come if hem lest, hem sholde no-thing fayle;
And for to been in ought espyed there,
That, wiste he wel, an impossible were.

76

Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind
Of every pye and every lette-game;
Now al is wel, for al the world is blind
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
This timber is al redy up to frame,
Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
A certain houre, in whiche she comen sholde.

77

And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce
Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,
[illegible]
That he was goon to doon his sacrifyse,

78

And moste at swich a temple alone wake,
Answered of Appollo for to be,
And first, to seen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden
flee,
And forthy lette him no man, god forbede,
But preye Apollo helpen in this nede

79

Now is ther litel more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente,
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.

80

Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye
As he was wont, and of him-self to jape,
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lenger doon him after hir to gape,
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve

81

At whiche she lough, and gan *hir* faste excuse,
And seyde, "it rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?"
"Lat be," quod he, "ne stond not thus to muse,
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anoon"
So at the laste her-of they felle at oon,
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she
were.

82

Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir, "nay, for he was out of towne,"
And seyde, "nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand fold to dye"

83

Nought list myn auctor fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town y fare,
As if he seyde ther-of sooth or no,
But that, with-oute awayt, with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte

84

But nathelees, yet gan she him *biseche*,
Al-though with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were,
And wel avyse him whom he broughte there,
And seyde him, "eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste"

85

He swor hir, "yis, by stokkes and by stones,
And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle,
Or elles were him lever, soule and bones,
With Pluto king as depe been in helle
As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?
Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
And she to souper com, whan it was eve,

86

With a certayn of *hir* owene men,
And with hir faire nece Antigone,
And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten,
But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see
Thurgh-out a litel windowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe,

87

Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
But to the poynt, *now* whan she was y-come
With alle joye, and alle frendes *fare*,
Hir eem anoon in armes hath hir nome,

80

When he arrived, *in* his accustomed way
He joked and jested at his own expense,
But finally he paused and made display
Of earnestness and of great exigence
And said for no excuse and no pretence
He'd let her off, but come she must that eve
To supper at his house by her good leave

81

At this she laughed and in excuse replied,
'It's raining, look! So how then could I go?'
'That's *nothing*,' said he. 'Just let me decide
You've got to come—*I* will not take a no!'
And so at last they left the matter so,
For he had whispered softly in her ear,
'Don't come if you won't, but for it you'll pay dear!'

82

But she was not quite ready to give way,
And asked if maybe Troilus was there
'O no," he said, "*he's* out of town today!
But niece I say, supposing that he were,
You have no slightest cause for fear or care,
Indeed a thousand times I'd rather die,
Than have folk on him at my house to spy"

83

Explicitly no one has set it down,
Just *what* she thought when Pandar told her so,
That Troilus was that *day* out of town,
If *Cressida* believed his tale or no,
But that she went with him to sup we know,
At least as he so urgently besought,
No matter what she knew or what she thought

84

But nevertheless she did again beseech
Although to go she had no hesitation,
That *he forget* not foolish people's speech
Who dream what *never* was in all creation,
And that he give this full consideration,
'For uncle' said she, 'since in you I trust,
Take heed, for follow where you lead I must"

85

To do all this he swore by sticks and stones,
And all the gods that high in heaven dwell,
Or let him be, said he *both* skin and bones,
As deep as Tantalus in lowest hell
Where Pluto reigns! What is there more to tell?
All thus arranged he rose and took his leave,
And she to supper came when it was eve,

86

Along with certain of her household men,
And with her charming niece Antigone,
And others of her women nine or ten
Who now was glad? Who other can it be
But Troilus who stood where he could see,
Right through a little window in a room
Where he till midnight hid in lonely gloom,

87

To all the folk save Pandar quite unknown?
But to the point! When she had come at last,
With all her friends, as I before have shown,
Her uncle with his arm about her cast,

Together with his guests to supper passed,
And when they all were seated happily,
The dainties served there were a sight to see.

88

[illegible]

But every thing at last must have an end,
And she prepared her homeward way to wend

89

Thou Chance, executrix of each man's weird!
O Influences dwelling in the sky!
All under God, our fates by these are steered,
[illegible]

90

[illegible]

But Pandar only laughed at them, and cried,
"'Tis fine for ducks and ladies now outside!

91

[illegible]

92

[illegible]

93

"That's very kind," she said, "my uncle dear,
And if you really wish, it shall be so
[illegible]

94

So far, so good! Then they began anew
The conversation in a merry strain,
But Pandar kept the main point still in view,
And he to get them soon to bed was fain
"Good Lord," he said, "this is a mighty rain!
It's just the weather for a good long sleep!
Let other things until tomorrow keep!

95

"And, niece, I have a place for you to stay,
Right here, where we shan't be too far asunder,

And after to the souper, alle and some,
Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.

88

And after souper gonnen they to ryse,
At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devyse
To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made
He song, she pleyde, he tolde tale of Wade.
But at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.

89

But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of thise hevenes hye!
Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes,
Though to us bestes been the causes wrye
This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,
But execut was al bisyde hir leve,
At the goddes wil, for which she moste bleve.

90

The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
Saturne, and Jove, in Cancro joyned were,
That swich a rayn from hevene gan avale,
That every maner womman that was there
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere,
At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,
"Now were it tyme a lady to go henne!

91

[illegible]

For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame"

92

Criseyde, whiche that coude as muche good
As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
And sin it ron, and al was on a flood,
She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde,
For hoom to goon it may nought wel bityde

93

"I wol," quod she, "myn uncle leef and dere,
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so,
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here,
I seyde but a-game, I wolde go,"
"Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!" quod he tho,
"Were it a game or no, soth for to telle,
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle."

94

Thus al is wel, but tho bigan aright
The newe joye, and al the feste agayn,
[illegible]

And that I rede us sone to biginne

95

And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
For that we shul not liggen fer asonder,

And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes nor of thonder?
By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.

96

And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shul youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be,
And if ye liggen wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte.
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste'

97

Ther nis no more, but here-after sone,
The voydè dronke, and travers drawe anon,

98

99

So whan that she was in the closet leyd,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce
A bedde weren, ther as I have seyd,

100

But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt therinne,
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde up-on his werk biginne,
And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne,
And stille as stoon, with-outen lenger lette,
By Troilus a-doun right he him sette

101

And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,

Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede"

102

Quod Pandarus, "ne drede thee never a del,
For it shal been right as thou wilt desyre,
So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel,
Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre"
"Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,"
Quod Troilus, "as wis as I thee serve,
And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.

And watch and guard upon your women keep

96

97

Of all the folk from out the room had gone
But still the pelting rain kept on and on,
And such a storm of wind blew all around,
You could not hear a single other sound

98

But added, "At this door not far from you,
Your women will be lodged across the hall,
And if you want them, you need only
call"

99

That those who made the racket should keep still,
And let the others sleep who had the will

100

101

And then he had a story to relate

102

Said Pandar, "Don't be in the least afraid,
For all shall turn out just as you desire,
Tonight I say your fortune shall be made,
Or else tonight the fat be in the fire."
'O blessed Venus, now my heart inspire,"
Cried Troilus, "and in thy service high
My time forever I shall occupy!

103

"And if there reigned, O Venus, queen of mirth,
Aspects of Saturn, or of Mars malign,
Or thou wert quenched or hindered at my birth,
Thy father pray that he this harm of mine
Will turn aside, and grant me joy divine,
For love of him for whom thou felt'st love's pain,
Adonis, by the fateful wild boar slain!

104

"O Jove, thou lover of Europa fair,
Who as a bull didst carry her away,
Now help! O Mars, who bloody cloak dost bear,
For love of Venus hinder me not I pray!
O Phoebus, think how Daphne pined one day
Beneath the bark, and to a laurel grew,
And help me now, for love of her so true!

105

"O Mercury, I beg in Herse's name,
Though Pallas was against Aglauros set,
Now help! Diana, let not modest shame
Dissuade thee now to aid me and abet!
O Fatal Sisters, ere my nurse made yet
My swaddling clothes, my destiny ye spun,
So help me in this work that is begun!"

106

Said Pandar, "O, you chicken hearted wretch!
Are you afraid because you think she'll bite?
Put something on—this over cloak just fetch
Along and follow me to see a sight!
But wait, I'll go ahead, to make all right!
Then he undid a little secret door,
And Troilus waiting, he went on before

107

The wind so roared and rumbled round about,
No other sound could anywhere be heard,
And those whose beds stood near the door without,
ey slept and not a single person stirred,
For none had caught a whisper or a word
Then Pandar found the door, without a light,
Where they all lay, and softly shut it tight

108

We don't want meddlers now to interfere!"

109

thought

110

"Like sleeping dogs, you know—just let them sleep!
Don't ever give a chance for vague surmise
Your women are in slumber sunk so deep,
You might pull down the town before their eyes,

103

And if I hadde, O Venus ful of mirthe,
Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
Thy fader pray al thilke harm disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
For love of him thou lovedest in the shawe,
I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.

104

O Jove eek, for the love of faire Europe,
The whiche in forme of bole away thou fette,
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy blody cope,
For love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette;
O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede!

105

Mercurie, for the love of Hiersè eke,

Me shapen was, my destenè me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bi-gonne!"

106

Quod Pandarus, "thou wrecched mouses herte,
Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte,
But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte"
And with that word he gan un-do a trappe,
And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe

107

The sterne wind so loude gan to route
That no wight other noyse mighte here,
And they that layen at the dore withoute,
Ful sikerly they slepten alle y-fere,
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon with-outen lette,
Ther-as they laye, and softely it shette.

108

And as he com ayeinward prively,
His nece awook, and asked "who goth there?"
"My dere nece," quod he, "it am I;
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere",
And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere,
"No word, for love of god I yow biseche,
Lat no wight ryse and heren of our speche"

109

"What! which wey be ye comen, *benedicite*?"
Quod she, "and how thus unwist of hem alle?"
"Here at this secree trappe-dore," quod he

110

It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne,
Your wommen slepen alle, I under-take
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne,

And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende

111

Now nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,"
Quod he, "so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir 'leef' and 'dere herte' calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle,
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hir-self a shame, and him a gyle.

112

Now wherby that I telle yow al thus?
Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyl ye liven sholde.

113

Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a prive wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of my-self, as wisly have I joye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!

114

And he is come in swich peyne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse,
But if god helpe, and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste"

115

Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde,
"Allas! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! allas! conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe!

116

Horaste! allas! and falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, god helpe me so," quod she;
"Allas! what wikked spirit tolde him thus?
Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see,
I shal ther-of as ful excusen me
As ever dide womman, if him lyke",
And with that word she gan ful sore syke

117

"O god!" quod she, "so worldly selinesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
Y-medled is with many a bitternesse!
Ful angwisshous than is, god woot," quod she,
"Condicioun of veyn prosperitee,
For either joyes comen nought y-fere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here

118

O brotel wele of mannes joye unstable!

And will sleep so until the sun shall rise;
And when I've told you what I have to say,
As silent as I came, I'll go away.

111

"Dear niece, I'm sure you quite well understand,
And all, I think, agree in this," he said,
'That if you have a certain man in hand,
Whose hopes with honeyed words you long have fed,
And yet you set a fool's cap on his head,
I mean, with someone else you are too thick,—
Why, that's a shameful and a nasty trick.

112

'Now let me tell why I say this to you
You know yourself as well as any wight,
That all your love is promised and is due
To Troilus, that good and noble knight,
And with such pledges you your faith did plight,
You never would your love to him deny,
Unless, indeed the fault in him should lie.

113

"But here's the point, that since to bed I went,
This Troilus, with something on his brain,
Has by a gutter, through a secret vent,
Into my chamber come in all this rain,
Of course unknown to all let me explain,
Save me alone in all the town of Troy,
I swear as I have hope of heaven's joy.

114

'Now he has come this night in such great grief
That I'm afraid lest he may lose his mind,
For he is hurt and wild beyond belief,
And now the reason for all this I find,
His faith in you a friend has undermined,
Who says you love a fellow named Horast,
For grief of which this night may be his last"

115

Cressida heard this tale with great surprise,
And therewithal she felt her heart grow cold,
And suddenly exclaimed, with tears and sighs,
Alas, I thought, whatever tales were told,
My sweetheart would not me so lightly hold
For false! Alas they'll drive me to my death,
These liars with their foul and poisoned breath!

116

'Horast! And me be false to Troilus!
Indeed I never knew him," answered she
'Alas, what wicked spirit told him thus!
But Troilus tomorrow I shall see,
And from these charges I myself shall free,
In his and in the eyes of all good men,"
And thereupon she sighed and sighed again

117

"O God," she cried, "these blessings temporal,
Which scholars falsely call felicity,
With bitterness are mingled and with gall!
God only knows what anguish then hath he
Who sees his empty joys before him flee!
For either joys arrive inopportune,
Or else they flit and vanish all too soon!

118

"O fickle fate! O worldly joy unstable!

Of men thou makest but a sport and play!
All know that they to hold their joy are able,
Or know it not—there is no other way
Now if one knows it not, how may he say
That he of perfect joy perceives the spark,
If ignorance still leaves him in the dark?

119

[illegible]

120

"And so this problem I must thus decide,
That verily, for aught that I can see,
No perfect joy can in this world abide
But O, thou viper, wicked jealousy!
O folly faithless, envious of me!
Why hast thou bred in Troilus distrust,
And I in all things ever true and just!"

121

"You know," said Pandar, "that of Troilus"—
"Why, uncle dear," she cried, "who told him so?
Alas why does my sweetheart treat me thus?"
"O, well, he said, "the way of the world, you
know
But what's gone wrong, we'll make the right way
go
The way to stop all this with you doth rest,
And everything will turn out for the best"

122

"So shall I do tomorrow," answered she,
"And in a way I m sure will satisfy"
"Tomorrow?" he cried, "as well eternity!
[illegible]

123

"There comes a fitting time for everything,
And when a room's afire or a hall,
It's better folk at once some help should bring,
Than stand and argufy amongst them all,
'How chanced this candle in the straw to fall?'
The harm is done the while they thus debate,
To lock the stable door is then too late

124

"And niece, one thing I hope you'll let me say,
If all the night you leave him in this state,
Your love for him has been but vain display
That's how it seems to me at any rate
You can't abandon him to such a fate,
You know yourself, 'twould be the height of folly
To leave him in this dangerous melancholy"

125

"My love a vain display! You never loved
As I have loved," indignantly she cried
"Well, that," he said, "remains yet to be proved!
But since by me you think you're justified,
I wouldn't let him in this sorrow bide,

With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
Either he woot that thou, joye, art muable,
Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye,
Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
That he hath verray joye and selinesse,
That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?

119

Now if he woot that joye is transitorie,
As every joye of worldly thing mot flee,
Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
The drede of lesing maketh him that he
May in no parfit selinesse be
And if to lese his joye he set a myte,
Than semeth it that joye is worth ful lyte.

120

Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
That trewely, for ought I can espye,
Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
But O, thou wikked serpent Jalousye,
Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
That never yet agilte him, that I wiste?"

121

Quod Pandarus, "thus fallen is this cas"
"Why, uncle myn," quod she, "who tolde him this?
Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?"
"Ye woot, ye nece myn," quod he,
"what is,
I hope al shal be wel that is
amis.
For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
And doth right so, for I holde it the beste"

122

[illegible]
For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecching in y-drawe,
Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe

123

Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe,
For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle,
Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
How is this candel in the straw y-falle?
A! *benedicite!* for al among that fare
The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!

124

And, nece myn, ne take it not agreef,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two,
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so,
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in jupartye."

125

"Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef," quod she
"Now by my thrift," quod he, "that shal be sene;
For, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see

For al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde god, I never mote have joye!

126

Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in jupartye
For thing of nought! Now, by that god above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.
What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentilesse!"

127

Quod tho Criseyde, "wole ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese,
Have here, and bereth him this blewe ring,
For ther is no-thing mighte him bettre plese,
Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese,
And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe."

128

"A ring?" quod he, "ye, hasel-wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken,
And swich a ring, trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon,
That fele I now," quod he, "and that is routhe;
O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouthe!

129

Another day, whan that I mighte him finde·
But this thing stont al in another kinde

130

This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,

131

Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist is t' every wight,
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon ne sinne,
I wol my-self be with yow al this night
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight,
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste."

132

This accident so pitous was to here,

133

Cryseyde answerde, "as wisly god at reste
My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!
And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,

I swear by Jove who in Olympus reigns,
No, not for all the gold that Troy contains!

126

"Now, look, if you who are his only love,
Shall put his life all night in jeopardy,
Just for a trifle, by the God above,
Both inconsiderate this act would be
And show in you a bad propensity
If you abandon him, I'm frank to say,
Nor wisdom nor yet kindness you display."

127

"At least," said Cressida, "this can I do,
And that will bring him some relief and ease.
Convey to him this ring with stone of blue,
For there is nothing will him better please,
Except myself, or more his wrath appease,
And say to my sweetheart that all his sorrow
Is without ground, as he shall see tomorrow."

128

"O pshaw," said he, "a fig for all your ring!
The sort of ring he needs must have a stone
With power enough the dead to life to bring,
And such a ring, dear niece, you do not own
Discretion from your head seems to have flown!
O time, O wasted opportunity,
O cursed sloth, O heedless sluggardy!

129

"Do you not know that men of courage high,

130

"This man is of such high and gentle heart,
His sorrows with his death he well may wreak;
Be sure, however sorely he may smart,
No jealous word to you he'll ever speak.
And now no further subterfuges seek,
Insist no longer on your wilful pride,
But say the word his heart to cheer and guide.

131

132

Now so distressing was all this to hear,

133

"God knows," said Cressida, "it makes me sad
To hear of my dear love's distress and woe;
To help him in his sorrow I d be glad,

If what was best to do I could but know;
But whether you should stay or for him go,
I am, till heaven some direction send,
But at Dulcarnon, at my wits' last end"

134
"Dulcarnon"? said he, 'let me tell you, dear,
That means, 'last hope of those of feeble mind'
Such persons in their heads are never clear,
But stay for very sloth perversely blind,
And for such folk this saying is designed,
But you are wise, and what we have in hand,
Calls for no subtle wit to understand"

135
"Well, uncle," said she, "do as you think
best!
But let me first, before he comes, arise
And since my trust in you two all doth rest,
And since you both are most discreet and wise,
I beg you will this matter so devise,
My honor and his wish to satisfy,
For everything in your hands now doth lie"

136
"Well spoken that," he said, "my niece so dear!
You've shown you have a wise and gentle heart!
But just lie still and let him come right here,
Your messages you can as well impart,
And may you ease each other's pain and smart
And now at last, O Venus, praise to thee,
For soon some happy times we here shall see"

137
Troilus now beside his lady kneeling,
Full soberly beside his lady's bed,
Extends to her his greetings with such feeling,
he waxes all at once a rosy red,
She could not speak a word, to save her head,
On seeing him so sudden and unbidden,
Come from the place in which he had been hidden

138
But Pandar always knew just what to do,
And now to break the ice, his jokes began,
And said 'See how this lord doth kneel to you!
Just rest your eyes upon this gentleman!"
And quickly then, he for a cushion ran,
And said, 'Take this, and on it kneel your fill!
And may your hearts be purged of every ill!'

139
Just why she did not order him to rise,—
If sorrow drove the thought out of her mind,
[illegible]

him
And to a seat beside her did assist him

140
"All's ready now," said Pandar, "to begin!
That's right, dear niece, these curtains interfere,
Just let him sit upon your bed within,
It's easier so each other's words to hear"
Then he withdrew and left the way all clear,
And took a light and sat down by the fire,
As though to read he felt a great desire.

If that I hadde grace to do so
But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
I am, til god me bettre minde sende,
At Dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende."

134
Quod Pandarus, "ye, nece, wol ye here?
Dulcarnon called is 'fleminge of wrecches',
It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
For verray slouthe or othere wilful tecches,
This seyd by hem that be not worth two fecches.
But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde"

135
"Thanne, eem," quod she, "doth her-of as yow
list,
But er he come I wil up first aryse,
And, for the love of god, sin al my trist
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
So wircheth now in so discreet a wyse,
That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
For I am here al in your governaunce."

136
"That is wel seyd," quod he, "my nece dere,
Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte,
And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte,
For love of god, and, Venus, I thee herie,
For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie"

137
This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
Ful sobrely, right by hir beddes heed,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette,
But lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
She coude nought a word a-right out-bringe
So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge

138
But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele
In every thing, to pleye anoon bigan,
And seyde, "nece, see how this lord can knele!
[illegible]

139
[illegible]
But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
That she him kiste, al though she syked
sore,
And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more

140
Quod Pandarus, "now wol ye wel beginne,
Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere,
Upon your beddes syde al there withinne,
That ech of yow the bet may other here"
And with that word he drow him to the fere,
And took a light, and fond his contenaunce
As for to loke up-on an old romaunce

141

Thus to him spak she of his jelousye

142

"Lo herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistence,
And eek bycause I felte wel and say
Your grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,
This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne

143

And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit,
Of whiche, my dere herte and al my
knight
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,
Al can I nought as muche as it were right,
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with al myn herte,

144

And dredelees, that shal be founde at preve —

That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse

145

My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how
That Jalousye, allas! that wikked wivere,
Thus causelees is cropen in to yow,

arace

146

But O, thou Jove, O auctor of
nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here injure
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee,
That undeserved suffrest jalousye,
And that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!

147

148

But certeyn is, som maner jalousye
Is excusable more than som, y wis.

141

142

Though love she said should be of such a kind

And that your heart was mine has been so plain
This led me to have pity on your pain

143

And since I ve ever found you good and wise,
For which my precious heart and my true
kn ght
I thank you now as far as in me lies

144

And that I m sure you do and will believe
To say this sweetheart goes against the grain

145

But precious one I know not how nor why
That viper jealousy insidious thief
Should thus into your bosom creep so sly
The which to both of us is cause of grief
Alas that thou shouldst thus beyond belief
Exalt lo v jealousy to such a place!
May Jove such thoughts from out your heart
erase!

146

But O thou Jove from whom all things have
life

147

Another shame is this that folk abuse
True love and say Yea jealousy is love!

148

Some sorts of jealousy I will confess
Are more excusable than other kinds,

As when there's cause or when folk long repress
Some harsh fantastic notion in their minds,
Which in expression no free outlet finds
And on itself it thus doth grow and feed,
For such repression is a gentle deed

149

'And some are filled with fury and despite
So full that it surpasses all restraint—
But sweetheart you are not in such plight
Thank God and all your grieving and your plaint
I call it an illusive lover's taint
From love s excess and from anxiety,
From which this long time you have not been free,

150

"At which I grieve but do no anger feel
But now if this will set your heart at rest,
Just as you will by oath or by ordeal,
By lot or any way you think the best,
I m ready here to undergo the test
If I am guilty, take my life away!
What more alas is there that I can say?'

151

Some tears with that, like shining drops of dew
Fell from her eyes but only two or three,
Thou knowest, God, that Cressida untrue
To Troilus is not, nor e er shall be!'
And then upon her couch she laid her head
And sighing sore covered it with the sheet
And held her peace in silence quite complete

152

May heaven bring relief for all this sorrow!
There s ground for hope for such is heaven s way,

153

Poor Troilus when he heard how she spoke
Imagine how her chiding words struck deep!
A heavy stick it was that struck this stroke,

dead

154

And mentally the hour he did curse
That he came there or that when he was born!
For what was bad, was now turned into worse
And for love s labors lost, he could but mourn,
And count him of all creatures most forlorn
O Pandar thought he, all thy cunning guile,
Has come to naught but this alack the while!

155

As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
With pietee so wel repressed is,
That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,
But goodly drinketh up al his distresse,
And that excuse I, for the gentilesse

149

And som so ful of furie is and despyt,
That it sourmounteth his repressioun,
But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
That thanke I god, for whiche your passioun
I wol not calle it but illusioun,
Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
That dooth your herte this disese endure

150

Of which I am right sory, but not wrooth,
But, for my devoir and your hertes reste,
Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!
And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
Allas! what mighte I more doon or seye?"

151

With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Out of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde,
"Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrewe
To Troilus was never yet Criseyde"
With that hir heed doun in the bed she leyde,
And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
And held hir pees, not a word spak she more

152

But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe,
So hope I that he shal, for he best may,
For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe
Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day,
And after winter folweth grene May
Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,
That after sharpe shoures been victories

153

This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe,
For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
To here or seen Criseyde his lady wepe,
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
For every teer which that Criseyde asterte,
The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the
herte

154

And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
That he cam there, and that he was born,
For now is wikke y turned in to worse,
And al that labour he hath doon biforn,
He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
"O Pandarus," thoughte he, 'allas! thy wyle
Serveth of nought, so weylawey the whyle!'

155

But nathelees, whan that he speken mighte,
Than seyde he thus, "god woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!"

156

Ther-with the sorwe so his herte shette.
That from his eyen fil ther not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned and oppressed were.
The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere,
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne,
And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.

157

This was no litel sorwe for to see;

And seyde, "O theef, is this a mannes herte?"
And of he rente al to his bare sherte,

158

And seyde, "nece, but ye helpe us now,
Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!"
"Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn," quod she, "alas! that I was born!"
"Ye, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?" quod Pandare,
"Sey 'al foryeve,' and stint is all this fare!"

159

"Ye, that to me," quod she, "ful lever were

160

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes

161

And gan bet minde and reson to him take,

162

163

Quod Pandarus, "for ought I can espyen,

156

Though sorrow at his heart so sternly pressed,

157

158

"There's naught to do except pull out the thorn
That sticketh in his heart," wise Pandar said
"Say 'All's forgiven,' and raise him from the dead"

159

160

Until a breath he drew, and none too soon,
And so begin to come out of his swoon

161

And when some notice he began to take,
Full sore he was abashed and mortified,

"Why do you act like this? For shame on thee!"

162

Her arm around his neck she gently laid,
Forgiving him with many a soft embrace,
And his apologies he humbly made,

163

Let joy alone within your hearts abide —
And took his candle to the chimney side

164

Yet less than oaths quite often satisfies
In such a case as this for every man
Who loveth well will do the best he can

165

At first she asked insisting she would know,
What man and where and also why
He jealous was and no cause to be so
And also all the signs he judged her by
She bade him tell and not a thing deny
Or else she said she saw no other way
She d have to think a trick he tried to play

166

And when he saw she would not be denied
Or if she were her doubts would be increased
Choosing the lesser evil he replied
It was he said at such and such a feast —
And thought she might have looked at him at least—
O I don t know he said some thing or other
'Twas all as well one answer or another

167

My dearest heart she said though it were true
Why such an imputation must you draw?
For by the God above who made us two
No harm in that I ever meant or saw!

Then Troilus began again to sigh
And new fears at his heart began to twine
Alas he said my errors heavy lie

169

True mercy said she is not slow or strained
Forgiven and forgotten be the past!
But let this night in mind be long retained
Of jealous doubts let this one be the last!
O yes dear heart! he promised quick and fast
And now she said the pain I ve given thee
Sweetheart I beg that you forgive it me!

170

Troilus f lt such glad relief at this
With trust in God and in his lady s grace

Don t swoon again or others may arise!

171

The helpless lark what can it do or say
After the hawk hath caught it in his claw?

Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye"
And bar the candel to the chimeneye

164

In many a cas, for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentilesse

165

But in effect she wolde wite anoon
Of what man, and eek where, and also why
He jelous was, sin ther was cause noon,
And eek the signe, that he took it by,
She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
Or elles, certeyn she bar him on honde,
That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde

166

With outen more, shortly for to seyne,
He moste obeye un to his lady heste,
And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne
He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste
She mighte on him han loked at the leste,
Not I not what al dere y nough a risshe,
As he that nedes moste a cause fisshe

167

And she answerde, 'swete, al were it so,
What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
For, by that god that boughte us bothe two,
In alle thinge is myn entente clene
Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene,
Wol ye the childish jalous contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were y bete"

168

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke,
Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde,
And seyde, "allas! upon my sorwes syke
Have mercy, swete herte myn, Criseyde!
And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
Be any wrong, I wol no more trespace,
Do what yow list, I am al in your grace"

169

And she answerde, 'of gilt misericorde!
That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this,
And ever more on this night yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do no more amis"
'Nay, dere herte myn," quod he, "y wis"
'And now,' quod she, that I have do yow smerte,
Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte"

170

And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, 'if ye ben wyse,
Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse"

171

What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
Whan that the sparhauk hath it in his foot?

I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,
To whom this tale sucre be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som tyme I moot,
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevinesse.

172
Criseyde, which that felte *hir* thus y-take,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes sevene;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk to hevene.

173
This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne,
And seyde, "O swete, as ever mote
I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon."
To that Criseyde answerde thus anoon,
'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!"

174
O! sooth is seyd, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
Ful bittre drink, and for to han gladnesse,
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse,
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thourgh a peyne hath founden al his cure.

175
And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn,
For out of wo in blisse now they flete
Non swich they felten, sith they were born,
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!
For love of god, take every womman hede
To werken thus, *if it comth* to the nede

176
Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that *juste* cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it joye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-binde,
Gan eche of hem in armes other winde

177
And as the newe abaysshed nightingale,
That stinteth first whan she biginneth singe,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe,
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte, and tolde him hir entente

178
And right as he that seeth his *deeth* y-shapen,
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
For al this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete,
With worse hap god lat us never mete!

Not otherwise it was with her that day;
Like it or not, this is all nature's law
And though my tale *throughout* a year I draw,
Lo, I, as does my author, still must tell,
After their grief, their time of joy as well.

172
Cressida in his arms thus boldly taken,
As all wise clerks have said in books of old,
Shook *like an* aspen leaf by breezes shaken,
As his strong arms about her body fold,
And Troilus, all freed of care so cold
Gave thanks to those bright Gods glorious seven—
In sundry ways thus folk are brought to heaven

173
Troilus in arms his love doth hold and strain,
And whispers, "Precious heart, now are you
caught!
In all the world there liveth but we twain!
Now you must yield, evasion helpeth naught!"
But of evasion she had little thought,
Had I not yielded," said she, 'sweetheart dear,
Before this night, I would not now be here!'

174
O true it is, before they can be *cured*,
Whether of fever or other great disease,
The sick must *drink*, for all they have endured,
Full bitter drink, and for their *better ease*,
Must oft partake of things that do not please.
All this to Troilus may be applied,
Who after pain is glad and satisfied

175
And sweetness now seemed more *than* ever sweet,
For all the bitterness that went before,
And now the time goes by on winged feet,
In joy so great it never could be more,
Or better pay for all the griefs they bore
And here I beg that lovers all will heed
This good *example* at their time of need!

176
And Cressida, from fear and dread all free,
With faith and *trust* in him now absolute,
Made him such feast that it was good *to see*
Such faithful service bear such happy fruit
And as the woodbine, growing near its root,
Doth clasp the tree with tendrils intertwined,
So they their arms about each other wind

177
And like the hushed *expectant* nightingale,
Who ceases after she begins to sing
If sound of voices loud her ears assail,
Or in the hedges stirreth anything,
But then thereafter lets her song out ring,
So Cressida, released from all her fear,
Opened her heart *for him* to look and hear

178
And like the man who sees his death impending,
And die he must, for aught that he can tell,
Yet sudden *rescue* brings a happy ending
And all the things he dreaded turn out well,
So now to Troilus like fortune fell,
For now at last he hath his lady sweet—
God grant we *may* with no worse fortune meet!

179

A thousand kisses seemed to him but few

180

"O Love," exclaimeth he, "O Charity!
Thy mother also, Citherea sweet,
After thyself exalted may she be,
O Venus gracious planet, I repeat,
And next to Venus, Hymen, I thee greet!
For never man was to you Gods more bound
Than I, who from my cares relief have found

181

182

"And since that I, who merited the least
To win thy gracious favor and support,
Have had my joys extended and increased
And am exalted in such lofty sort
That widest bounds to hold my joys fall short,
What can I do, but words of reverent praise
Unto thy bounty and thy goodness raise!"

183

Was ever man, he said, so little grieved
As I, on whom the fairest and the best
Deigneth her loving heart to bring to rest!

184

185

And if I sin with injury prepense,
Present or absent, I shall waive defence,

179

And ther-with-al a thousand tyme hir kiste;
That, what to done, for joye unnethe he wiste.

180

Than seyde he thus, "O, Love, O, Charitee,
Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete,
After thy-self next heried be she,
Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete,
And next that, Imenëus, I thee grete,
For never man was to yow goddes holde
As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde.

181

That serven best and most alwey labouren,
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But-if thy grace passed our desertes.

182

And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
Of hem that nombred been un-to thy grace,
Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve,
And me bistowed in so heygh a place
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!"

183

And therwith-al Criseyde anoon he kiste,
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese.
And thus seyde he, "now wolde god I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plese!
What man," quod he, "was ever thus at ese
As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste
That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.

184

Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
But herte myn, of your benignitee,
So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
Right thourgh the vertu of your heyghe servyse.

185

And for the love of god, my lady dere,
Sin god hath wrought me for I shal yow serve,
As thus I mene, that ye wol be my stere,
To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
So techeth me how that I may deserve
Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
Ne do no-thing that yow be displesaunce

186

For love of god, lat slee me with the dede,
If that it lyke un-to your womanhede "

187
"Y wis," quod she, "myn owne hertes list,
My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist,
But late us falle awey fro this matere,
For it suffyseth, this that seyd is here.
And at o word, with-outen repentaunce,
Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!"

188
Of hir delyt, or joyes oon the leste
Were impossible to my wit to seye,
But juggeth, ye that han ben at the feste
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, be-twixen dreed and sikernesse,
Felten in love the grete worthinesse

189
O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought,
How blithe un-to hem bothe two thou were!
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought,
Ye, or the leeste joye that was there?
A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!

190
But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyd, and, god to-forn, I shal
In every thing al hoolly his sentence
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwith-al right as your-selven leste.

191
For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
T' encrese or maken diminucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow bi-seche,
But now to purpos of my rather speche

192
Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem a-sonder goon it were,
That ech *from other wende been biraft*,
Or elles [illegible]

193
And, lord! so he gan goodly on hir see,
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde, "O dere herte, may
it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place?"
"Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace!"
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwith-al him kiste,
That where his spirit was, for joye he niste

194
This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, "O eyen clere,

And yield myself to thee at that same hour,
As humbly subject to thy womanly power "

187
"Enough," she cried, "O thou my richest treasure,
My ground of ease, and all I hold most dear,
I trust in thee beyond all bound and measure!
But let us talk no more of future fear,
There needs no more than thou hast promised here
I am content, befall what may befall,
Welcome, my knight, my peace, my all in all!"

188
To tell the limits of their great delight
For me were sheer impossibility,
But all can guess who such a festal night
Have ever known, I trust, in some degree;
And of these lovers twain, I merely say to thee,
That night twixt joy and fear they realize
How love may be a serious enterprise.

189
O night of love, by them so long time sought,
So happy now at last in consummation,
With my own soul I gladly would have bought
The least division of its delectation!
Away now every check to inclination,
And let them in this bliss of heaven dwell,
Too great for mortal tongue to sing or tell.

190
[illegible]

191
For all my words, in this and every part,
Are spoken under your correction all,
Who better know the secrets of the heart
Than I, and therefore I upon you call
To change or take away in general,
Such words as seem to you were best omitted;
But now to come back where our tale we quitted

192
[illegible]
That all this night was but hallucination,
And oft they said, for doubt this was but seeming,
' O art thou there, or am I only dreaming?"

193
With such intentive look he on her gazed,
His eyes were fixed unmoving on her face,
' O sweetheart," he exclaimed, "the Gods be
praised,
[illegible]

194
And he neglected not to kiss her eyes,
And when he did, he said, "O eyes so clear,

In you the cause of all my sorrow lies,
Ye double weapons of my lady dear!
Though mercy seemeth to be written here,
The text, forsooth, is very hard to find
How is it, without bonds thou couldst me bind?"

195
Within his arms his lady he doth take,
And full a thousand times he gently sighed,
Not sighs of sorrow, such as sad men make
From grief, or when by sickness they are tried,
But easy sighs, which showed how satisfied
He was, and how his love was deeply seated,
Such sighs he drew, and oft and oft repeated

196
And then they spoke of many varied things,
As in this situation would arise,
And playfully they interchanged their rings,
But what the mottoes were, you may surmise,
A brooch of gold, as azure as the skies,
Set with a ruby heart, she gave him too,
And pinned it to his shirt as love pledge true

197
Do you suppose that any grasping wretch,
Who chides at love and holds it in despite,
From all the profit he from gold can fetch,
Was ever so enriched with pure delight
As these two knew, in measure infinite?
Nay, they can never know, so God me save,
Such perfect joy who niggardly behave

198
And if they say they do, they merely lie,
Those busy wretches full of woe and dread,
They call love madness and against it cry,

199

200

sure
They knew each other, and how they did endure
The griefs now passed, for all that might annoy
This night was turned at last to perfect joy!

201
If in their talk of joy they came abrupt
On any woe of times now past and gone,
With kisses all their tale they interrupt,
And thus again to joy are brought anon
One thing alone their hearts were set upon,
To free their joy from all its base alloys,
And former grief with joy to counterpoise

It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere!
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye with-outen bond me binde?"

195
Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke,
Nought swiche sorwful sykes as men make
For wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,
But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
That shewed his affeccioun with-inne,
Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.

196
Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
As fil to purpos of this aventure,
And pleyinge entrechaungeden hir ringes,

197
Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wrecche,
That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche,
Was ever yet y-yeve him swich delyt,
As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
Nay, doutelees, for also god me save,
So parfit joye may no nigard have!

198
They wol sey "yis," but lord! so that they lye,
Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede,
They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede,
And live in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce,
And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!

199
As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispyse
Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse;
And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
And loveres nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!

200
Thise ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
Whan that hir hertes wel assured were,
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
That passed was, but al swich hevinesse,
I thanke it god, was tourned to gladnesse.

201
And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke
Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a newe joye anoon,
And diden al hir might, sin they were oon,
For to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
And passed wo with joye countrepeyse.

202

Reson wil not that I speke of sleep,
For it accordeth nought to my matere,
God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep,
But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
It was biset in joye and bisinesse
Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.

203

But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messager,
Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe,
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
Fortuna maior, than anoon Criseyde,
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde —

204

"Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas! what me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go,
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, allas! why niltow over us hove,
As longe as whonne Almena lay by Jove?

205

[illegible]

That thou thus fleest, and deynest us nought reste!

206

Thou dost, allas! to shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther god, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemi-spere binde,
That never-more under the ground thou winde!
For now, for thou so hyest out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my joye!"

207

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte him tho, for piëtous distresse,
The blody teres from his herte melte,
As he that never yet swich hevinesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therwith al Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere —

208

[illegible]

Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place,
Ther god thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?

209

Allas! what han thise loveres thee agilt,
Dispitous day? thyn be the pyne of helle!
For many a lovere hastow shent, and wilt,
Thy pouring in wol no-wher lete hem dwelle.
What proferestow thy light here for to selle?

202

You'll scarce expect that I should speak of sleep,

[illegible]

203

[illegible]

Fortuna Major—for the night was fled,
And Cressida to Troilus thus said

204

[illegible]

O night, why wilt thou not above us hover,
As long as when Jove was Alcmena's lover?

205

"O night so black, as one in old books reads,
Thou wert designed by God this world to hide
At certain seasons with thy inky weeds,
That men might then in rest and peace abide,
Yet beasts may well lament and men may chide,
That though by toil through all the day distressed,
Away thou flee'st and grantest them no rest!

206

"Thou dost, alas, thy time too quickly waste,
O heedless night! The maker of mankind
Curse thee for thy unnecessary haste,
And to our hemisphere so firm thee bind,
Thy way below thou ne'er again shalt find!
For through thy heedless hieing out of Troy
Thus have we hastily foregone our joy!"

207

Troilus too, at these sad bodings felt
The weight of heavy sorrow on him press,
His heart began in bloody tears to melt,
For never yet such grievous heaviness
He e'er had known or woe so comfortless;
And Cressida, his lady, he did take
Within his arms, and in this manner spake

208

'O cruel day, denouncer of the joy
That night and love have stolen and concealed,
Accursed by thy coming into Troy,

[illegible]

209

[illegible]

Why must thou proffer here thy light to sell?

Go sell to them who tiny seals engrave!
We want thee not, we need no daylight save!'

210

Titan, the sun, in like words did he chide,
And said, "O fool, well may men thee despise,
Thou hast all night fair Daybreak at thy side,
And yet permittest her so soon to rise
And so distress all lovers in this wise!
What, stay in bed, thou Titan, with thy
Morrow!
May heaven grant the both of you have sorrow!"

211

[illegible]

With my poor life what then is left to do?

212

"What hope is left? In truth I know not how
Or when, alas, I may occasion see
[illegible]

213

[illegible]
As you in mine, so naught can shut me out,
The world for me could hold no greater gain,
And that good thought would lighten all my pain"

214

To this fair Cressida replied anon,
[illegible]
And every rock from out its station start,
Ere Troilus from Cressida's poor heart!

215

[illegible]
Let no such fancy creep within your brain,
To cause me thus to perish with the pain

216

"If you hold me as firmly in your mind
As I hold you, I'll be content and glad,
And if it turn out so, then I shall find
No further happiness for heaven to add!
But, love, let's talk no more of glad and sad,
Be true to me, there's nothing more to say,
For I am thine, forever and a day!

217

"Be thus content, and cast away all fear!
Thou hast what ne'er shall have another man

Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven"

210

And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde, "O fool, wel may men thee dispyse,
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
For to disesen loveres in this wyse.
What! hold your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Mor-
we!
I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!"

211

Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde,
[illegible]
For how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?

212

What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme see,
That in this plyt I may be eft with yow,
And of my lyf, god woot how that shal be,
Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
That I am deed anoon, but I retourne.
How sholde I longe, allas! fro you sojourne?

213

But nathelees, myn owene lady bright,
Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
Were in your herte set so fermely
As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne,
Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne."

214

To that Criseyde answerde right anoon,
And with a syk she seyde, "O herte dere,
The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon,
That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere,
And every egle been the dowves fere,
And every roche out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!

215

Ye be so depe in-with myn herte grave,
That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought,
As wisly verray god my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
And, for the love of god that us hath wrought,
Lat in your brayn non other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye!

216

And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde
As I have yow, that wolde I yow bi-seche,
And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
God mighte not a poynt my joyes eche!
But, herte myn, with-oute more speche,
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!

217

Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse;
Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;

And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
To turne ayein soone after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
As wisly god myn herte bringe at reste!'
And him in armes took, and ofte keste

218
Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be,
This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
And in his armes took his lady free
An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,
And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,
He seyde, 'farewel, my dere herte swete,
Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to mete!'

219
To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne,
And Troilus un to his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne,
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
For to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce

220
Retorned to his rēal palais, sone
He softe in to his bed gan for to slinke,
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought, he may wel ligge and winke,
But *sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke*,
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand fold was worth more than he wende

221
And in his thought gan up and doun to winde
Hir wordes alle, and every contenaunce,
And *fermely impressen in his minde*
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce,
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce,
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede

222
[illegible]

Desyring eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere

223
Pandare, a morwe which that comen was
Un to his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
Seyde, 'al this night so reyned it allas!
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete
Al night," quod he, "hath reyn so do me wake,
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake

224
And ner he com, and seyde, 'how stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?
Criseyde answerde, 'never the bet for yow,
Fox that ye been, god yeve your herte care!
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare
Trow I,' quod she, 'for alle your wordes whyte,
O! who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!"

And if it be thy will O sweetheart dear
[illegible]

218
[illegible]

219
To this no word for sorrow she replied
And grief that thus they must be rent in twain
And Troilus unto the palace hied
As woe begone as she I dare maintain
So heavy was the burden of the pain
Of joys remembered but so sudden vanished,
He felt as one from heaven sternly ban shed

220
He reached the palace as the daylight grew
And softly to his bed he planned to slink
And sleep as late as he was wont to do—
But planned in vain for not a single wink
Of sleep into his heart might gently sink
For pondering she who now his life controlled
Was better than he guessed a thousandfold

221
About his loving thoughts now twist and wind
Her every word and every loving glance
Impress ng clear and firm upon his mind
Each slightest point and circumstance
And at the memory of his happy chance
Love bursts anew in flames of high desire
Though little feels he now the burning fire

222
Cressida also in the selfsame wise
The worth the gaiety and every deed
Of Troilus recalled before her eyes
And all remembrances for him so plead
That from this love she never can be freed
She longs again to have him in such plight
That she alone may bring to h m del ght

223
Now Pandar seeing day was there at last
[illegible]

224
Then he drew near and said How do you do
This sunny morn? How do you feel today?"
[illegible]

225

Cressida strove her blushing face to hide
Behind the sheet, and grew for shame all red
But Pandar underneath the bedclothes pried,
"Dear Cressida, if I must die,' he said,
'Have here a sword and smite off my poor head!'
He thrust his arm beneath her neck to twist
The covers off, and then his niece he kissed

226

Away in great amicability,
As good friends now as anyone could be,
Till in good time to her own house she went
And left her uncle very well content

227

And greeting him in manner dignified,
Upon his bed he sat down at his side

228

And Troilus, moved by the deep affection
Which for his friend within his heart now lies,
Falls on his knees in absolute subjection,
Nor from that humble place he will arise,
But thank with grateful thank he multiplies,
A thousand times, and oft the day doth bless
His friend was born to save him from distress.

229

"O friend," he said, "of friends the very best
That ever was or ever was heard tell,

230

"The sun, which moves above in all man's sight,
Saw never yet, this dare I will aver,
A fairer than my dearest lady bright,
And to my death I shall be bound to her,
The thanks for all this favor I refer
To Love, who honors me with kind assistance,
And also, Pandar, to thy wise persistence

231

"What thou hast given is no little thing
And I shall pay thee thanks forever and aye!

Till he was through, and thus replied

232

"My dearest friend, if aught I ve done for thee,
God knows it is to me a great relief,
And I'm as glad of it as you can be
But now take heed that we come not to grief,
For there is danger still of this mischief,

225

With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed,
And Pandarus gan under for to prye,
And seyde, "nece, if that I shal ben deed,
Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed"
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste

226

But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente

227

Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
That resteless ful longe a-bedde lay,
And prevely sente after Pandarus,
To him to come in al the haste he may
He com anoon, nought ones seyde he "nay,"
And Troilus ful sobrely he grette,
And doun upon his beddes syde him sette.

228

This Troilus, with al the affeccioun
Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knees fil adoun,
And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
He gan him thonken in his beste wyse,
A hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse,
That he was born to bringe him fro distresse.

229

He seyde, "O frend, of frendes th' alderbeste
That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
Thou hast in hevene y-brought my soule at reste
Fro Flegiton, the fery flood of helle,
That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.

230

The sonne, which that al the world may see,
Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye,
So inly fair and goodly as is she,
Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
That thanked be the heighe worthinesse
Of love, and eek thy kinde bisinesse.

231

232

"My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
In any cas, god wot, it is me leef,
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God help me so, but tak now not a-greef
That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,

That, there-as thou now brought art in to blisse,
That thou thy-self ne cause it nought to misse

233
For of fortunes sharp adversitee
The worst kinde of infortune is this,
A man to have ben in prosperitee,

234
Thou art at ese, and hold thee wel ther inne
For also seur as reed is every fyr,
As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne,

235
Quod Troilus, "I hope, and god toforn,

236
Tho gan he telle him of his glade night
And wher of first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde, freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now,
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth

237
I noot m[y]self

That ones may in hevene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye

238

239
Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete,
For which he felte his herte in joye flete,
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie,
And lat see now if that he can be merie

240
And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.

That now that thou art settled in thy bliss
Thyself may cause affairs to go amiss

233
Of fickle fortune s sharp adversities
The very worst misfortune of them all
Is this to know and lose all joy and ease
And have but bitter memories to recall
Exert thy wisdom such fate to forestall
Be not too rash nor of thyself too sure
Or harm will quickly come and long endure

234

235
I hope said Troilus before men s eyes
Dear friend that I such heed shall take
That through my fault no danger shall arise,
And rashness I abjure for her dear sake
You need not fear my promise I shall break
If you but knew the secrets of my m nd
Then mighty little cause for fear you d find

236

237

Than when he knew it only by hear say'

238

239

240
The manner of th s meeting was aga n
Somewhat as I have told and as you know,
And so I shall not bother to explain,

But to the end now let us straightway go,
For Pandar still his faithful aid did show
And brought them to the place they liked the best,
And there they are in quiet and in rest

241
You have no need, now they again are met,
To ask of me if they were happy there
For what was good before, grows better yet
A thousandfold, with goodness still to spare
And now they know no sorrow or no care,
For joy as great to them the kind Gods send
As any human heart may comprehend

242
This is no trifling thing that now I say,
'Tis something no man's wit can all comprise,
For each to other's will doth so obey
That all the joys which ancient clerks so wise
Have praised, counted as nothing in their eyes;
Their joy may not be written down in ink,
For it surpasses all that heart may think!

243
[illegible]
Calling it traitor, envious and worse—
O, bitterly the light of day they curse!

244
"Alas," said Troilus, "now is it plain
That Pyroeis and his team mates three,
Which draw the bright sun's chariot in their train,
Have gone some short cut in despite of me,
And that is why the night so soon doth flee,
And if the sun will hasten thus the day,
No offerings on his altar shall I lay"

245
[illegible]
And thus for many a night their lives they led
As Fortune gave to them this ample joy,
To Cressida and Troilus of Troy

246
[illegible]
Himself in gaudy garments he arrays,
He has a world of folk about always,
The freshest and the best that he can find,
As suiting one of his so noble kind

247
[illegible]
Though other ladies were both fair and kind,

But playnly to the effect right for to go,
In joye and seurte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde broughte, whan hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quiete and in reste

241
Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were,
For if it erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquere.
A-gon was every sorwe and every fere,
And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche joye as herte may comprende.

242
This is no litel thing of for to seye,
This passeth every wit for to devyse;
For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye;
Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
This joye may not writen been with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bithinke

243
But cruel day, so wel-awey the stounde!
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
And day they gonnen to dispyse al newe,
Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse,
And bitterly the dayes light they curse

244
Quod Troilus, "allas! now am I war
That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
Han goon som by-path in despyt of me;
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,
Ne shal I never doon him sacrifyse!"

245
But nedes day departe moste hem sone,
And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere,
They twinne anoon as they were wont to done,
And setten tyme of meting eft y-fere,
And many a night they wroughte in this manere
And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in joye
Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye

246
In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede,
He spendeth, justeth, maketh festeyinges,
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
And held aboute him alwey, out of drede,
A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
The fressheste and the beste he coude finde,

247
That swich a voys was of him and a stevene
Thorugh-out the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene
And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
That in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
That there nis lovere in this world at ese
So wel as he, and thus gan love him plese

248
The godlihede or beautee which that kinde

In any other lady hadde y-set
Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
A boute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet,
That it undoon on any manere syde,
That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.

249

[illegible]

250

[illegible]

And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle,

251

That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
[illegible]

And that the mone hath lordship over the nightes,
Al this doth Love, ay heried be his mightes!

252

That that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for ever-mo,
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth a-sonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.

253

So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde,
[illegible]

To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe."

254

In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was [illegible]

255

In tyme of [illegible] ie,

Yet all the virtues in their natures set
About his heart one knot could not unbind
Of Cress[illegible]

249

And Pandar by the hand he oft would take,
[illegible]

It was a heavenly joy his praise to hear,
And thus he sang unto his lady dear

250

[illegible]

251

[illegible]

252

[illegible]

253

[illegible]

To learn to love, and thus in pity grow,
But faithful hearts may Love keep ever so!"

254

In all events that at the siege occurred,
[illegible]

255

[illegible]

Smiled salutations down from where she sto

256

Now most of love and virtue was his speech,
And he despised all actions mean and low
Nor failed to practice what some men but preach
To honor those who first did honor show,
And comfort those in sorrow and in woe,
And when he heard that any man fared well
In love, such news he liked to hear and tell

256

And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse,
And douteless, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse.
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,
That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde

257

He held each man in estimation slight
Unless he were engaged in love's emprise—
[illegible]

257

For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight
But if he were in loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that oughte it been of right
And over al this, so wel coude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unkouth wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,
That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.

258

And though he was himself of royal race,
He treated no man with unkindly pride,
Benign he was to each in every place
For which he won high praise on every side
For love demanded by its native grace,
That he should shun all envy pride and ire,
All avarice and other base desire.

258

And though that he be come of blood royal,
Him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase,
Benigne he was to ech in general,
For which he gat him thank in every place
Thus wolde Love, y-heried be his grace,
That Pryde, Envye, Ire, and Avaryce
He gan to flee, and every other vyce

259

[illegible]
Thus far with you to guide my tale hath won!
And now since ye on other ways will wend
Honor and praise be yours world without end!

259

[illegible]
That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,
Ye heried been for ay, with-outen ende!

260

Your aid hath helped me in my song to tell
How Troilus to joy at last attained
Though with his joy there was some grief as well,
[illegible]

260

[illegible]
My [illegible] book now endeth in this wyse,
And Troilus in luste and in quiete
Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete

HERE ENDETH THE THIRD BOOK

BOOK IV

[PROEM]

1

Too short a fleeting time alas the while,
Great joy endures and Fortune wills it so
Who truest seems when most she will beguile,
And most allures when she will strike a blow,
And from her wheel some hapless victim throw,
For when some wretch slips down and disappears,
She laughs at him and comforts him with jeers.

1

BUT al to litel, weylawey the whyle,
Lasteth swich joye, y-thonked be Fortune!
That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
And can to foles so hir song entune,
That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune,
And whan a wight is from hir wheel y-throwe,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe

2

From Troilus she now began to turn
Her face and paid to him but little heed,
She made his lady her true lover spurn,
And on her wheel she set up Diomede,
At which, in truth my heart begins to bleed,

2

From Troilus she gan hir brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
But caste him clene oute of his lady grace,
And on hir wheel she sette up Diomede,
For which right now myn herte ginneth blede,

And now my penne, allas! with which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.

And now my pen, with which I faltering write,
Trembles for fear of what I must endite.

3

For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,
Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,
Mot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
As wryten folk thorugh which it is in minde
Allas! that they shulde ever cause finde
To speke hir harm, and if they on hir lye,
Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye

3

How Cressida her Troilus forsook,
Or at the least how she became unkind,
Henceforth must be the matter of my book,
As ancient records bring the tale to mind
Alas that ever they a cause should find
To speak her harm! But if the records lie,
Shame on the head of slanderers I cry!

4

O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three,
That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone,
Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne,
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
So that the los of lyf and love y-fere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here

4

Ye daughters of black night! Ye furies three,
Ye who lament in everlasting pain,
Megaera, Alecto and Tisiphone!
Thou cruel Mars, Quirinus' father, deign
To aid my fourth book to its end to gain
And tell how loss of love and loss of life
May be the final end of lovers' strife!

HERE ENDETH THE PROEM

HERE BEGINNETH THE FOURTH BOOK

5

Ligginge in ost, as I have seyd er this,
The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye toun,
Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is
Up-on the brest of Hercules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte

5

The Grecian hosts, as I before have told,
Still lay in siege about the Trojan wall
And when within the Lion beams of gold
From Phoebus on the Lion's breast first fall,
Then Hector doth his barons to him call
And plan to meet the Greeks in open fight,
And work such injury as there they might.

6

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente,
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,
Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente,
And in the berd, with-oute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anoon hem mette

6

I do not know how long it was between
The day they made their plan and when they meant
To fight but with their arms all bright and keen,
With spears in hand and great bows tautly bent,
Hector with many a worthy warrior went
Before the town, for battle ready set,
And on the field their foeman soon they met.

7

The longe day, with speres sharpe y grounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde,
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle
But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hem-selven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they fledden.

7

The whole long day with all spears sharply ground,
With arrows, darts, with swords and heavy maces,
They fiercely fight, and horse and man confound,
While axes dash out brains and cleave men's faces,
But at the last the Trojan host retraces
Its steps, faltering where their captains led
And in defeat at night they homeward fled.

8

At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Trojan daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye
Dredden to lese a greet part of hir joye

8

That day Antenor yielded in the fight,
And Polydamas nor yet Menestheus,
Xanthippus, Sarpedon or Polynestor might,
Polites nor the Trojan Sir Ripheus
Withstand the Greeks, still less Sir Phebuseus,
And all his like, the harm that day done Troy
The city's hopes did very near destroy

9

Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete
This thing anoon was couth in every strete,
Bothe in th'assege, in toune, and everywhere,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere

9

Thereafter the Greeks a truce agreed to make,
As Priam asked the purpose to debate
Of changing prisoners in a give and take,
And for the surplus, money payments great
This news at once began to circulate
Among both Greeks and Trojans far and near
And very soon it came to Calchas ear

10

Assured that all was true as it was told
Into the Greek assembly Calchas pressed
Where sat the Grecian lords so wise and old,
And took his rightful place among the rest,
And solemnly he made them this request
That they would do him so much reverence
To stop their noise and give him audience

11

"My lords I was a Trojan in past days"
He said ' as doubtless all of you know well

And all its walls the Greeks shall batter down

12

'And how at last the Greeks shall win this prize
And seize the town and conquest full achieve,
You ve heard me often in detail previse
All this you know my lords as I believe
And how the Grecian fortunes to retrieve,
I came in my own person here from Troy
On your behalf my knowledge to employ,

13

' Renouncing all my treasure well content

14

' Except a daughter, whom I left behind,

And so my lords except you heed my sorrow
Methinks I ne er shall see another morrow

15

' And I so long my lords have held my peace,
Because I saw no way to bring her here,
But now or never must come her release,

16

' Trojans enough you have as captives caught,
With one of these, if so your will it be,
Redemption for my daughter may be bought
I beg you in your generosity,
One of so many captives give to me!
Why should you such a little thing refuse
Since all the town and folk are yours to choose?

17

' For here again I faithfully will swear,
Just as Apollo hath it to me told
And as the stars above likewise declare,
And auspices and auguries of old
I swear by *all these signs so manifold,*

10

When Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him there as he was wont to done,
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,
For love of god, to don that reverence,
To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience

11

Thanne seyde he thus, "lo! lordes myne, I was
Trojan, as it is knowen out of drede,
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede
For dredelees, thorugh yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye y brend, and beten doun to grounde.

12

And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This town to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse,
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com my-self in my propre persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done,

13

Havinge un-to my tresour ne my rente

I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I joye,
For you to lese al that I have in Troye,

14

Save of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!
Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?
Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!
For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
But-if ye lordes rewe up-on my sorwe

15

For, by that cause I say no tyme er now
Hir to delivere, I holden have my pees,
But now or never, if that it lyke yow,

16

Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun
Trojans y nowe, and if your willes be,
My child with oon may have redempcioun

17

On peril of my lyf, I shal not lye,
Appollo hath me told it feithfully,
I have eek founde it by astronomye,
By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,

That fyrn and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede,
And thus shal Troye turne in asshen dede.

18
For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
Right in despyt of king Lameaudoun
By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre,
The toun of Troye shal ben set on-fyre"

19
Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
The salte teres from his eyēn tweye
Ful faste ronnen doun by eyther cheke.
So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke
That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.

20
[illegible]

And whan Pryam his save-garde sente,
Th'embassadours to Troye streyght they wente.

21
The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let here-upon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal
Th'embassadours ben answered for fynal,
Th'eschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.

22
This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
For which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But nathelees, he no word to it seyed,
Lest men sholde his affeccioun espye,
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.

23
And ful of anguish and of grisly drede
Abood what lordes wolde un-to it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Th'eschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges
tweye,
First, how to save hir honour, and what weye
He mighte best th'eschaunge of hir withstonde,
Ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.

24
Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go,
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
"With-oute assent of hir ne do not so,
Lest for thy werk she wolde by thy fo,
And seyn, that thorugh thy medling is y-blowe
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe."

25
For which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,

That fire and flame on all the town shall spread,
And Troy shall turn to ashes, cold and dead

18
"Phoebus on high, and watery Neptune, too,
Who gave its walls unto the Trojan town,
Are angry at the Trojan folk untrue,
And eager now to tear those same walls down;
Laomedon, who bore the royal crown,
Refused to pay to them their proper hire,
For which their city shall be burned with fire"

19
Rehearsing thus his tale, this old man gray
And feeble to the Greeks doth humbly speak,
With tears as salty as the ocean spray
Fast running down on either withered cheek.
So long he begs and earnestly doth seek,
That at the last, to stop his long lament,
To give to him Antenor they consent.

20
When thus the long debate was brought to close,
Calchas arrangements with the legates made
Whom for their embassy the Grecians chose,
[illegible]

21
The purpose of their embassy they told,
And Priam listened with attentive ear,
A parliament he bade the Trojans hold,
Which I but briefly need to dwell on here,
For with one voice the Trojans spoke out clear,
That they approved of this proposed exchange,
And all details were ready to arrange

22
[illegible]

23
[illegible]
away,
Two things he planned to do without delay,
Both save her honest name, and keep her still
In Troy, if strength availed thereto or skill

24
For if she longer might not there abide,
Then naught was left for him except to die,
But Reason told him on the other side,
[illegible]

25
To this decision thus he came at last,
That if the lords decreed that she must go,

26

Now Hector, who had heard the Greeks' demand,
For Cressida Antenor to restore,
Against this spoke and firmly took his stand
'Sirs, she is not a prisoner of war!
I know not what you want this lady for,
But for my part, you can go back and tell
Your friends, we have no women here to sell!"

27

You can't imagine what a stir this made,
For all the folk blazed up like straw on fire;
Their luck against them in this matter played,
They got their wish and their confusion dire
'Hector,' they said, 'what's this that you require,
To shield this woman and cause us thus to lose
Antenor, whom you should the rather choose,

28

"Who is so wise and of such great renown,
And we have need of men, as you can see,

29

O Juvenal, how truly thou didst say,
The people never know for what they seek,
For what they want seems right in every way,
And clouds of error ever render weak
Their judgments, in whate'er they do or speak;
For though Antenor now had every voice,
In time the Trojans shall repent their choice

30

And she must go, declare both hare and hound

31

And so it was decreed in parliament,
At end of much debate and wild uproar,
And thus announced there by their president,
Though Hector did this action much deplore,
But finally he could do nothing more,
For folk and all in this were quite agreed,
And by the parliament it was decreed

32

Discussion ended, home the Trojans went,
And Troilus, as well, with footsteps slow,

He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente
And whan that she had seyd him hir entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.

26

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
For Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrely answerde —
"Sires, she nis no prisoner," he seyde,
"I noot on yow who that this charge leyde,
But, on my part, ye may eft-sone him telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle."

27

The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw y-set on fyre;
For infortune it wolde, for the nones,
They sholden hir confusioun desyre
"Ector," quod they, "what goost may yow enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor?—a wrong wey now ye chese—

28

That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun,
And we han nede of folk, as men may see;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun,
O Ector, lat tho fantasyës be!
O king Pryam," quod they, "thus seggen we,
That al our voys is to for-gon Criseyde",
And to deliveren Antenor they preyde

29

O Juvenal, lord! trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne
That they ne finde in hir desyr offence,
For cloud of errour lat hem not descerne
What best is, and lo, here ensample as yerne.
This folk desiren now deliveraunce
Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!

30

For he was after traytour to the toun
Of Troye, allas! they quitte him out to rathe,
O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe,
But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toune,
And she shal out thus seyden here and howne.

31

For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

32

33
And as in winter leves been biraft,
Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
So that ther nis but bark and braunche y-laft,
Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech wel-fare,
Y-bounden in the blake bark of care,
Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
So sore him sat the chaungynge of Criseyde

34
He rist him up, and every dore he shette
And windowe eek, and tho this sorweful man
Up-on his beddes syde a-doun him sette,
Ful lyk a deed image pale and wan,
And in his brest the heped wo bigan
Out-breste, and he to werken in this wyse
In his woodnesse, as I shal you devyse.

35
Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
Now here, now there, y-darted to the herte,
And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge,
Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte,
His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to confounde

36
His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
Out stremeden as swifte wells tweye,
The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him rafte, unnethes mighte he seye,
"O deeth, allas! why niltow do me deye?
A-cursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!"

37
But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somwhat gan asswage,
Up-on his bed he leyde him doun to reste,
But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse

38
Than seyde he thus, "Fortune! allas the whyle!
What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde awey, for that thou wilt?
Allas! how maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?

39
Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro joye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
In to miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, allas! til that the breeth me fayle?

40
Allas, Fortune! if that my lyf in joye
Displesed hadde un-to thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
By-raft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye,

33
And as the leaves in winter blow away,
By one and one, leaving the tree all bare,
And only bark and branch the winds withstay,
So now unhappy Troilus doth fare,
Close bound within the dismal bark of care,
And wild with fear lest he dare not refuse
The vote by which he Cressida must lose

34
Then up he rose and fastened every door,
And window, too and then this wretched man
Upon his bedside sat him down once more,
And sat as still as any image can,
And looked as wan until his woe began
At last to break forth in a raging storm,
And how he acted, I shall you inform

35
Not otherwise than as the fierce wild bull
Doth roar and leap and spring when from his heart
The huntsman forth the fatal spear doth pull,
So Troilus doth from his bedside start,
And beat his breast, and here and yonder dart,
Striking his head full hard against the wall,
And to the floor his body oft doth fall

36
His eyes for very sorrow turned to fountains,
From which the tears in double streamlets well,
And from his breast, as if from bursting mountains,
The sobs broke forth, scarce leaving breath to tell
His grief "O death" he said, "thou traitor fell,
Why must I stay alive who curse the day
That I was born this hapless part to play!"

37
But when the fury and the blinding rage
Which thus his heart afflicted and oppressed,
With time began a little to assuage,
Upon his bed he laid him down to rest,
And now the flood of tears attained its crest,
It was a marvel that the body could
Endure the woe and grief in which he stood

38
'O Fortune" he exclaimed, "alas the while!
What have I done? What crime have I committed?
How didst thou have the heart me to beguile?
Shall I by thee be evermore outwitted?
Must thou so strong 'gainst Cressida be pitted?
Alas, that thou, so cruel and unkind,
Shouldst towards me cherish such a hostile mind!

39
'To honor thee do I not ever strive,
Above the other Gods and powers all?
Why dost thou of my blessing me deprive?
O Troilus, well may mankind thee call
Most wretched of all wretches, who dost fall
To such a depth in which thou must bewail
Lost Cressida, till thy last breath shall fail

40
'Fortune, alas, was it for my delight
In love that I have lost thy favor high?
Why didst thou not my father in despite
Deprive of life, or let my brother die,
Or me myself, who on thee thus do cry?

I cumber world whose happy days are sped
Forever dying yet never fully dead!

41

If Cressida alone to me were left
I d care not Fortune what course you might steer!
But of my love you have me now bereft
For tis your way to keep man still in fear
To rob h m of the one he holds most dear
You prove your strength by wanton violence
And thus I m lost all hopeless of defence

42

43

What shall I do? And shall I never master
The living torment and the cruel pain
Of th s so unforeseen and great disaster?
Alone in solitude let me complain
And never see it shine or see it rain
But in the dark like Oedipus of old
End both my life and sorro vs manifold!

44

O weary spir t wandering to and fro
When wilt thou seek elsewhere a place of rest
And let this body to destruction go?
O lurking soul fly forth from out thy nest!
Abandon th s sad heart and weary breast
And follow Cressida thy lady dear
For now thy proper home no more is here

45

O weary eyes since all your bl ss and joy
Was but in Cressida s reflected l ght

46

O Cress da my sovereign lady dear

To serve thee as thy everlasting slave
While I shall lie forgotten in my grave

47

'O all ye lovers high upon the wheel
Of Fortune set in joy and bliss secure
God grant that ye may find your love of steel
And may your joyous l fe full long endure
And when ye come upon my sepulture
Remember that your comrade resteth there
For I loved too though sorrow was my share

48

O old enfeebled mis-behaving man—
Calchas I mean—what wickedness led thee
To leave thy Troy and join the Grecian clan?

I, combre world, that may of no-thing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?

41

If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughte I whider thou woldest me stere,
And hir, allas! than hastow me biraft.
But ever more, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gerful violence
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence

42

O verray lord of love, O god, allas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas
If I for go that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought
In to your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! it be repeled?

43

What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure
Allone as I was born, y wis, compleyne,
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne,
But ende I wil as Edippe, in derknesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

44

O wery goost, that errest to and fro,
Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
O soule, lurkinge in this wo, unneste,
Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folwe alwey Criseyde thy lady dere,
Thy righte place is now no lenger here!

45

O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
In veyn fro-this forth have I eyen tweye
Y formed, sin your vertue is a weye

46

O my Criseyde O lady sovereyne
Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
Who shal now yeven comfort to my peyne?
Allas, no wight, but when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so un to yow hyeth,
Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve,
For thy no fors is, though the body sterve

47

O ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel
Ben set of Fortune, in good aventure,
God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
And longe mot your lyf in joye endure!
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your felawe resteth there,
For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were

48

O olde unholsom and mislyved man,
Calkas I mene, allas! what eyleth thee
To been a Greek, sin thou art born Trojan?

O Calkas which that wilt my bane be,
In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
As wolde blisful Jove, for his joye,
That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!'

49
A thousand sykes hottere than the glede,
Out of his brest ech after other wente,
Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
For which his woful teres never stente;
And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente,
And wex so mat, that joye nor penaunce
He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.

50
Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
So that for wo, he niste what he mente;
But in a rees to Troilus he wente.

51
A certeyn knight that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it him anoon,
And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
In to the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
Toward the bed gan softely to goon,
So confus, that he niste what to seye;
For *verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.*

52
And with his chere and loking al to-torn,

53
This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare y-comen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendreliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.

54
But at the laste this woful Troilus
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,

55
This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
Ful pitously answerde and seyde, 'yis!

56
For in this world ther is no creature,

O Calchas thou my fatal bane wilt be
For thou wast born to be a curse to me!
O would that Jove would grant the happy hour
That thou wert here in Troy and in my power!

49

50

51

So deeply agitated and dismayed
One word he could not summon to his aid

52

53

54
But finally this woful Troilus
Half dead with sorrow burst out in a roar

55

56
In all this world no creature ever saw

57

"But tell me why you thus beyond all reason
Lament and lie upon your bed supine,
For had you not your joy in its good season?
Give thanks for joy, yourself to loss resign!
But I that ne'er in love, as thou in thine
Hast prospered, nor ever knew a friendly eye,
'Tis I who might thus weep and wail and sigh!

58

"And here's another thing—I dare aver
This town is full of ladies round about,
Fairer indeed than any twelve like her,
And if you want me, I can pick one out,
Yes more than one or two, without a doubt
Be glad, therefore, my own dear chosen brother,
If she is lost, why, we can get another

59

[illegible]

Each by her excellences should be measured,
For heroner and falcon both are treasured

60

"As Zanzis wrote, who was so very wise,
A new love expediteth oft the old
Adapt yourself as new conditions rise,
And ever on your heart maintain your hold,
No fire so hot but time will make it cold,
And since all pleasures are but accidental,
New accidents are nothing detrimental

61

"For just as sure as day comes after night,
Some new love, some new task, or some new woe,
Or even seldom having her in sight,
These all assist affections old to go
And one of these you're bound to have, you know,
For out of sight, she'll soon be out of mind,
Whereby new comfort you shall quickly find"

62

These wise and cheering words good Pandar spoke
To help his friend as helpless he there lay,
As one who any measures would invoke,
No matter how much nonsense he might say.
But Troilus did slight attention pay
To all this rigmarole or what it meant,
In one and out the other ear it went

63

At last he said, as on his arm he leaned,
"This medicine and cure proposed by you,
Were well enough if I were but a fiend!
Be false to Cressida, to me so true!
That's something, Pandar, I shall never do!
But slay me rather here upon the spot
Than I should add this shame to my sad lot.

As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorugh cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe or al devyne?
Swich is this world, for-thy I thus defyne,
Ne truste no wight finden in Fortune
Ay propretee, hir yeftes been comune.

57

But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had,
So that, by right, it oughte y-now suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an yë,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.

58

And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve,
This town is ful of ladies al aboute,
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute
For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother,
If she be lost, we shul recovere another

59

What, god for-bede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!

[illegible]

Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.

60

And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,
'The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde',
And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.
Thenk eek, thy-self to saven artow holde,
Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
For sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.

61

For al-so seur as day cometh after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
Don olde affecciouns alle over-go.
And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho
To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte"

62

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde
For doutelees, to doon his wo to falle,
He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde
But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente,
Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente —

63

But at the laste answerde and seyde, "freend,
This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee;
But do me rather sterve anon-right here
Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere

64
She that I serve, y wis, what so thou seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires til that I deye
For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
I wol not been untrewe for no wight,
But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
And never other creature serve

65
And ther thou seyst, thou shalt as faire finde
As she, lat be, make no comparisoun
To creature y formed here by kinde
O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
[illegible]

66
[illegible]

67
Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bi goon,
He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus,
'Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon.'
Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle

68
The deeth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne,
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
[illegible]

69
[illegible]
[illegible] gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That him is wors that is fro welle y throwe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele y knowe?'

70
But tel me now, sir that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love ay to and fro,
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love an other lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?

71
If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature on lyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve?

64
[illegible]

65
But when you say that others you can find
[illegible]

66
[illegible]
Now in now out now new love ousting old
What claim on love can you expect to hold!

67
Indeed what you have said seems thus to me
As you should tell one sick with ills severe
[illegible]
Before such medicine can work a cure.

68
[illegible]

69
But for that argument of yours so fine
That resignation lighter grief should be
Because my lady one time has been mine
And we have known the meaning of felicity—
What nonsense! Truther once you said to me
His lot is worse who out of joy is thrown
Than his who never any joy hath known

70

O Pandar, tell me where you went to school,
Who argue thus so futilely by rule!

72

[illegible]

73

[illegible]

74

[illegible]
The time has come for me to leave this earth,
For fate hath made my life but little worth"

75

[illegible]

76

"Good friend, since you thus dwell in great distress,
And since you find so much in me to blame,
Why don't you make an effort to redress
Your griefs, and strength and manhood thus
 proclaim?
Take her by force and hold her so! For shame!
Or either let her go in peace elsewhere,
Or keep her here and banish all your care!

77

"Art thou in Troy, and dost thou lack the nerve
To take a woman who's in love with thee,
And would love more if thou more shouldst deserve?
A greater folly never did I see!
Get up at once and let thy weeping be,
And show thou art a man with manly powers,
You'll see that Cressida shall still be ours"

78

[illegible]

79

"You know this town is now involved in war
Because a woman was borne off by force,

O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?

72

[illegible]
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle;
For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte y-cleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

73

Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre,
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I no-thing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou outher do me anoon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!

74

Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
[illegible]

75

This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambyk ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen doun he caste.
But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste,
"What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I som-what more un-to him seye":

76

And seyde, "freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse,
And with thy manhod letten al this
 grame?
Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame!
And outher lat hir out of toune fare,
Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.

77

Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
To take a wommam which that loveth thee,
And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent?
Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be,
And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure"

78

[illegible]
Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.

79

First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravisshing of wommen so by might,

It sholde not be suffred me to erre,

Since she s to be exchanged for Troy s own good

80

I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
To aske hir at my fader, of his grace,
Than thenke I, this were hir accusement,
Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchace
For sin my fader, in so heigh a place
As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
He nil for me his lettre be repeled

80

I ve also thought of course with her consent
To ask my father for her as a favor

81

Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe
With violence, if I do swich a game,
For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
It moste been disclaundre to hir name
And me were lever deed than hir defame,
As nolde god but if I sholde have
Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!

81

And I m afra d my lady twould disturb
If by such violence I should her claim
The tongue of the world is very hard to curb

82

Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see,
For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
I moste hir honour lever han than me
In every cas as lovere oughte of right
Thus am I with desyr and reson twight,
Desyr for to distourben hir me redeth,
And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth "

82

All hope is lost for aught that I can see!
For true it is that as her faithful knight
Her honor still my first concern must be
Such service do I owe to her of right
Desire and Reason in me ever fight
Desire insists Let force control the day
But Reason counsels quite the other way!"

83

83

84

Pandare answerde, freend thou mayst, for me,

roune,
A wonder last but nyne night never in toune

84

You may said Pandar as far as I m concerned
Let your heart break! But were I in so deep
A man like you I d take her if it turned
The whole town topsy turvy in a heap
The more they talked the stiller you could keep
And to their hearts content just let them
shout
For n ne days always wears a wonder out

85

Devyne not in reson ay so depe
Ne curteysly, but help thy self anoon,
Bet is that othere than thy selven wepe
And namely sin ye two been al oon
Rys up, for by myn heed she shal not goon,
And rather be in blame a lyte y founde
Than sterve here as a gnat with-oute wounde

85

Don t get involved in reasonings too deep
Or precious Help yourself the first of all!

86

It is no shame un to yow ne no vyce
Hir to with holden, that ye loveth most
Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce
To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost
Thenk eek Fortune as wel thy selven wost,
Helpeth hardy man to his empryse,
And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.

That fortune helps the brave in his emprise,
But from the coward wretch she ever flies.

87

"Your lady may at first a little grieve,
But peace with her you easily can make
[illegible]
What's good for one, is good, too, for another.

88

"And Troilus, this also here I swear,
If Cressida, as we indeed suppose,
An equal love and faith with you doth share,
She'll thank you if she can escape her foes,
No matter what disturbance from it grows,
But on the other hand, if she abandons you,
Then she is false and fickle, through and through

89

"Take courage then, recall you are a knight!
True love, you know, hath no regard for law.
Exhibit now your valor and your might,
And stand not here in trembling and in awe,
While griefs and fears your very vitals gnaw
Despise the world and all the planets seven,
And if you die a martyr, go to heaven!

90

[illegible]

91

These vigorous words made Troilus revive,
"Enough," he cried, "I give my full assent.
You need no further urge me on, or strive
To speak in terms so stern and vehement
For here I tell you fully my intent
Abduct her, that is what I mean to do,
But only so if she consents thereto"

92

"Let that," said Pandar, "be as be it may!
[illegible]
Unless some angel told it in your ear?

93

"Get up, pretend that nothing has occurred,
[illegible]
For you In short, be glad, my brother dear,
You really haven't anything to fear

94

[illegible]
Just what part each of you must plan and play,

87

And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,
Thou shalt thy pees ful wel here-after make,
But as for me, certayn, I can not leve
That she wolde it as now for yvel take
Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?
Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love, and why shaltow not have another?

88

And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere,
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nil not take a-greef,
Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel the lasse.

89

For-thy tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thy-self, for any awe.
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and sevene;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.

90

I wol my-self be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, up-on a stounde,
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
Thourgh-girt with many a wyd and blody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
A-dieu, the devel spede him that it recche!"

91

[illegible]
That, for no cas, it is not myn entente,
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it wolde"

92

"Why, so mene I," quod Pandarus, "al this day.
But tel me than, hastow hir wel assayed,
That sorwest thus?" And he answerde, "nay"
"Wher-of artow," quod Pandare, "than a mayed,
That nost not that she wol ben yvel apayed
To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
But-if that Jove tolde it in thyn ere?

93

[illegible]
Or, up-on cas, he may after thee sende
Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere,
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

94

[illegible]

Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste,
And fare now wel, for in this point I reste "

95

The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
Was thorugh-out Troye y fled with preste winges

96

The whiche tale anoon right as Criseyde
Had herd, she which that of hir fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,

97

As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
On Troilus y set so wonder faste,
That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde,
Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste,
She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste
And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
So that she niste what was best to rede

98

But as men seen in toune, and al aboute,
That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
For pitous joye, and wenden hir delyte,
And with hir tales, dere y nough a myte,
These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle,
They sette hem doun, and seyde as I shal telle

99

Quod first that oon, I am glad, trewely,
By cause of yow, that shal your fader see "
A nother seyde, 'y wis, so nam not I,
For al to litel hath she with us be "
Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, y wis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde! '

100

Although the body sat among hem there
Hir advertence is alwey
elles where
For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte,
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte

101

Thise wommen, that thus wenden hir to plese,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende,
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese
As she that, al this mene whyle, brende
Of other passioun than that they wende,
So that she felte almost hir herte dye
For wo, and wery of that companye

102

For which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,

And so decide what action seems the best
Farewell for at this point I pause and rest '

95

By sentence passed in highest parliament
Forth to her ancient father should be sent

96

But if the news that thus came to her ear
Were true or not she dared not ask for fear

97

For she had set her heart and mind
On Troilus long since so firm and fast
That all the world her love might not unbind,

98

It is the common custom in each land
For ladies to indulge in calls polite
And now there came to Cress da a band

99

And when she goes may heaven be her guide!

100

These words and other female blandishments
She hears but in her thoughts they have no share,
Another p cture quite her heart presents
Although in body she is sitting there
God knows her thought and mind are placed
elsewhere
And Troilus alone her sp rit sought
For whom she had no words but all her thought

101

102

And in the end she might no more restrain
Her tears for upward they began to well

As signs of all the inward bitter pain
In which her wretched spirit now must dwell,
Reflecting from what heaven to what hell
She fallen was since she hath lost the joy
That she had known with Troilus in Troy

103

And all the silly fools that sat about
Supposed she wept and sighed so long and sore,
Because from Troy she soon must now set out,
And their society enjoy no more!
And all the ladies there, almost a score
They saw her weep, and loved her tender heart,
And in the weeping all of them took part

104

And all endeavored with her to condole
But little knew the things of which she thought,
Or what alone could cheer her and console
And to be glad they often her besought
Which to her grief such mitigation brought
As for a splitting headache one might feel
If one were kindly rubbed upon the heel

105

When they had said all they could think to say
They took their leave and home departed all,

106

The bitter tears from out her eyes down pour,
Like April showers falling full and fast,
Her breast so white she beat and evermore
She called on death to take her at the last,
Such heavy sorrow now her soul harassed,
Her lover lost, who was her only hope
Forlorn in black despair so left to grope

107

Her rippling hair as golden as the sun,
She tore and wrung her hands with fingers small,
But no relief from sorrow thus she won

108

"Alas sent forth from out my home and nation,
I woful wretch bereft of all delight
And born beneath a cursed constellation
Must now depart from my beloved's sight!
Woe worth the day, and specially the night,
When first I saw him with my eyes so plain,
Who causes me, as I cause him such pain!

109

O Calchas father, thine is all this sin!
I curse the day my mother dear, Argive,
Brought me into this wretched world
alive!

That yeven signes of the bitter peyne
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle,
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte

103

And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute
Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Departe, and never pleye with hem more
And they that hadde y knowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse,
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir distresse,

104

And bisily they gonnen hir conforten
Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte,
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte
But swich an ese ther-with they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his helel

105

But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,
In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse,
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse

106

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
Doun fille, as shour in Aperill, ful swythe,
Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
She mot for-goon, for which disaventure
She held hir-self a forlost creature

107

Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte,
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte

108

"Alas!" quod she, "out of this regioun
I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight,
Wo worth, allas! that ilke dayes light
On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!"

109

She seyde, "how shal he doon, and I also?
How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
O dere herte eek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thou me bere on
lyve!

110

To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
How sholde a fish with-oute water dure?
What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
Live, with-oute his kinde noriture?
For which ful oft a by-word here I seye,
That, 'rotelees, mot grene sone deye.'

111

I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

112

And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agoon,
That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
The observaunce ever, in your absence,
Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

113

Myn herte and

...hat might Elysos, shul we been y-fere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

114

Thus herte myn, for Antenor, allas!
I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,
How shal your tendre herte this sustene?
But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene,
And me also, for, soothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye."

115

How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte

116

Pandare

...to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse,
Ther-as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message.

117

And fond that she hir-selven gan to trete
Ful pitously, for with hir salte
teres
Hir brest, hir face y-bathed was ful wete,
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,

110

"To what end should I live and sorrow thus?
Shall fishes without water long endure?
What worth is Cressida if Troilus
Is gone? For must not every plant procure
Its proper food, existence to assure?
Many a time I've heard the old wives say,
'Withdrawn from earth, things green all pass away.'

111

"And now, since either sword or pointed dart
Would be a rather cruel end for me,

Starvation bringing me a welcome death.

112

"And Troilus, let me be dressed in black,
In tokening, my precious sweetheart dear,
That I am gone and never can come back,
Who once was all your consolation here.
And so I'll live, till I lie on my bier,
As one from whom joy doth itself absent,
In sorrow, solitude and deep lament.

113

"My heart and soul and all that dwells therein,
Bequeathe I with your spirit to remain
Eternally, for each is other's twin

114

And me as well, for truly I can say,
If you are happy, let me go my way!"

115

Who might, as I cannot, the tale have sung

I would make her sorrows seem far less
Than they should seem, and weakly would I show
Her high lament, and so I let it go.

116

As emissary sent by Troilus
To Cressida, as you have heard me say,
And as before it was agreed on thus,

117

Poor Cressida, she was a woful sight,
Her breasts tear stained with falling drops
that made
Their way unheeded down her cheeks so white!
Her golden hair in bright disorder strayed

About her ears, escaped from out its braid,
Undoubted signal of the martyrdom
Of death, which none too soon for her may come.

118

He scarcely in the chamber might abide,
At her sad look he was so horrified,
And now her flood of woe broke out anew
And by release a thousandfold it grew

119

120

121

In pity for my harsh and cruel pain"

122

"I grant, dear lady, that your lot is hard,"
Said Pandar, "yet what do you plan to do?
For to yourself you should have more regard,
And not some vain and useless course pursue,
But now I want to say a word or two—
A message I must briefly now present
From Troilus, whose heart with pain is rent"

123

Her face she turned to him, so deathly pale,
It was a most distressing sight to see
"Alas," she said, "can words for aught avail?
What can my precious sweetheart say to me
Since we are lost through all eternity?
Will he have news of all the tears I've shed?
They are enough, at least that can be said"

124

Her grief exacts from her a dreadful price,

In her, and all her varied wit renewed,
Have fled, and left her mute in solitude

125

About her eyes there stands a purple ring,
A silent token of her grief and pain,

Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.

118

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon
Hir tery face a-twixe hir armes hyde,
For which thus Pandare is so wo bi-goon,
That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,
As he that pitee felte on every syde.
For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.

119

And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde,
"Pandare first of joyes mo than two
Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde,
That now transmuwed been in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow 'welcome' or no,
That alderfirst me broughte in-to servyse
Of love, allas! that endeth in swich wyse?

120

Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The *ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth*,
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see,
That my-self hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
Felinge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

121

Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitternesse,
A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.
I trowe, y-wis, from hevene teres reyne,
For pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!"

122

"And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,"
Quod Pandarus, "what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport,
Why woltow thus thy-selve, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to
That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente."

123

Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge
So greet that it a deeth was for to see —
"Allas!" quod she, "what wordes may ye bringe?

124

She was right swich to seen in hir visage
As is that wight that men on bere binde;
Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
Was al y-chaunged in another kinde.
The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
In hir, and eek hir joyes everychone,
Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.

125

Aboute hir eyen two a purpre ring
Bi-trent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne,

That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
For which Pandare mighte not restreyne
The teres form his eyen for to reyne
But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde
From Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde

126

But how this cas doth Troilus moleste,
That may non erthely mannes tonge seye,
For verray wo his wit is al aweye

127

For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That in to litel bothe it hadde us slawe,

128

This short and pleyne, th effect of my message,

And for the love of god, my nece dere,
So leef this wo er Troilus be here

129

130

Grevous to me, god wot, is for to twinne,"
Quod she, "but yet it hardere is to me
To seen that sorwe which that he is inne,
For wel wot I, it wol my bane be,
And deye I wol in certayn tho quod she,
But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me thre teth,
Dryve out that goost which in myn herte peteth.

131

Thise wordes seyd she on hir armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously
Quod Pandarus, ' allas! why do ye so,

132

For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde him selve slee, and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
For al the good that Pryam may despende.
For to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,
That knowe I wel, and for thy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye

Wherein to gaze was a distressing thing
And Pandar was unable to restrain
His tears which from his eyes began to rain,
But still things couldn t last forever thus,
And soon he spoke to her for Troilus

126

You know dear niece that it is sadly true

127

For thus we both have sorrowed he and I
And both have felt the pangs of mortal pain
But through my counsel he at length doth try
Somewhat from useless weeping to abstain
And now it seems that Troilus would fain
Be all n ght with you in convenient wise
Some remedy to plan and to devise

128

Of this I ve come you briefly to inform
If I his message rightly comprehend
And you who now indulge in such a storm

129

Alas that love and woe together press
Upon his heart where joy cannot remain!
The grief he feels doth double all my pain

130

God knows tis hard from him to separate
But harder yet than this it is to know

death
Drive out my soul and its last lingering breath!

131

132

133

"Str[illegible]

[illegible] tears, though tears should never cease,

Now [illegible]

133

And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge,
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom [illegible]

134

I mene thus, whan I him [illegible]

135

"Go then," said Cressida "and truly I
Shall [illegible]

"Go," quod Criseyde, "and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne
From weping in his sight, and bisily,
Him [illegible]

136

Then Pandar went, and Troilus he sought,
And found him in a temple all alone,
Weary of life and much [illegible]

136

[illegible]

137

And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye
For right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
"For al that comth, comth by necessitee,
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.

138

"I must believe and cannot other[illegible]

138

For certaynly, this wot I wel," he seyde,
"That for-sight of [illegible]

139

"But still I don't [illegible]

139

But nathelees, allas! whom shal I leve?
For ther ben grete clerkes [illegible]

140

"[illegible]

140

For som men seyn [illegible]

Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede

141

142

But it were rather an opinioun
Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;

143

Eek this is an opinioun of somme
That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore,

144

145

I mene as though I laboured me in this,
To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be,
As whether that the prescience of god is
The certayn cause of the necessitee
Of thinges that to comen been, pardee,
Or if necessitee of thing cominge
Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge

146

But now ne enforce I me nat in shewinge
How the ordre of causes stant, but wel wot I,
That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist biforen certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire

147

For if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessittee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be,

148

I seye, that if the opinioun of thee
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he mot sitten by necessitee,

If God foreknows the thought and act of each
Of us, we have no choice, as scholars preach

141

'For neither thought nor deed might ever be,
Or anything, unless foreordination,
In which there may be no uncertainty,
Perceives it without shade of variation;
For if there were the slightest hesitation
Or any slip in God's foreordering,
Foreknowledge then were not a certain thing,

142

'But rather one would call it expectation,
Unsteadfast, not foreknowledge absolute,
And that, indeed, were an abomination,
For God's foreknowledge thus to substitute
Imperfect human doubts and mere repute,
In God such human error to imply
Were false and foul and cursed treason high

143

That such foreknowledge doth but merely know

144

"But there resides here a perplexity
That in some proper way must be explained,
That things that happen do not have to be
Merely because they may be foreordained
Yet still this truth at least must be maintained,
That all the things that ever shall befall,
Must surely be ordained, both one and all

145

"You see that I am trying to find out
Just what is cause and what is consequence,

And thus ordaining cause for them provide?

146

I must confess I can't pretend to show
Just how the reasons stand, but this I'll say,
That every thing that happens must do so,
And must have been foreknown in such a way
That made it necessary, though it may
Be that foreknowledge did not so declare
That it must happen, be it foul or fair

147

'I say if that opinion which you hold
That he sits there is true, then furthermore
He must be sitting there, as I have told,

There's thus necessity on either score,
That he must sit as we agreed before
And you must think he does and so say I
Necessity on both of you doth lie

149

'But you may urge, this man he does not sit
Because your judgment on this may be true,
But rather since he sat ere you thought it,
Your judgment from his sitting doth ensue
But I say, though your judgment may be due
To his first sitting there necessity
To judge and sit distributed must be

150

'These arguments I think I may advance,

151

'Though things to come must all be foreordained,
Their cause therein you cannot simply find
For these two points apart must be maintained
But yet foreordinance cannot be blind
And God must foreordain with truthful mind
Or else whatever foreordained should be
Would come to pass through blind necessity

152

From such opinion only errors grow
That things that happen cause him to foreknow

153

154

I have just one more point to add hereto
That when I know that there exists a thing

155

With woe! He paused and scarcely was he through
With this request when Pandar doth appear
Within the door and speaks as you shall hear

156

"Almighty Jove he echoed, 'on thy throne,

And thus necessitee in either is
For in him nede of sitting is, y-wis,
And in thee nede of sooth, and thus, forsothe,
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe

149

But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinion of sitting soth is,
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,

150

Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be,
By whiche reson men may wel y see,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle

151

For al though that, for thing shal come, y-wis,
Therfore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is

152

And thus suffyseth right y-now, certeyn,
For to destroye our free chois every del —
But now is this abusion to seyn,

153

What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought
But that god purveyth thing that is to come
For that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,
That whylom been bifalle and over-come,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce,
That for-wot al with-outen ignoraunce

154

And over al this, yet seye I more herto,
That right as whan I woot ther is a thing,
Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so,
Eek right so, whan I woot a thing coming,
So mot it come, and thus the bifalling
Of thinges that ben wist bifore the tyde,
They mowe not been eschewed on no syde"

155

Than seyde he thus, "almighty Jove in trone,
That wost of al this thing the soothfastnesse,
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse"
And whyl he was in al this hevinesse,
Disputinge with him self in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here

156

"O mighty god," quod Pandarus, "in trone,

Ey! who seigh ever a wys man faren so?
Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a go!
Why lust thee so thy-self for-doon for drede,
That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?

157

Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
With-outen hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
Artow for hir and for non other born?
[illegible]

158

And yet this is a wonder most of alle,
Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost not yit,
Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
Ne if she can hir-self distorben it
Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
A man may al by tyme his nekke bede
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

159

For-thy take hede of that that I shal seye,
I have with hir y-spoke and longe y-be,
So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye
And ever-mo me thinketh thus, that she
Hath som-what in hir hertes prevetee,
Wher with she can, if I shal right arede,
Distorbe al this, of which thou art in drede.

160

[illegible]

161

This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore,
"Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so",
And what him liste, he seyde un to it more
[illegible]

162

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
Wher that he was, ne mighte o word out-bringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge

163

Tho woful teres that they leten falle
[illegible]

Who ever saw a grown man acting so?
Can't you do something else than weep and moan?
Why, Troilus, you are your own worst foe!
Good heavens, Cressida may never go,
So why afflict yourself with needless dread
And almost cry your eyes out of your head?

157

"Recall how many years you've lived, dear brother,
Without her, yet you got along with ease!
You weren't made for her and nary other!
There's plenty more who know the art to please
Among your helpful thoughts you might place these,
That as the chance in dice falls when you throw,
Just so in love, your pleasures come and go

158

"But this to me is cause of great surprise,
That you disturb your soul, and yet don t know,
Touching her going what in the future lies,
Nor if she can't devise some way to throw
Them off the track, and so not need to go,
To meet the ax a man his neck may stretch,
But why should that give pleasure to the wretch?

159

"And now I'll tell you what I have to say
I've been with her and told her your petition,
As we agreed between ourselves today,
And Troilus, I have a shrewd suspicion,
That in her heart she's got a proposition,
Though what it was she didn t fully mention,
That will repay the carefullest attention

160

[illegible]
Shall, as I hope, her favor to us send
I'm quite convinced your lady will attend
To this affair, so set your mind at rest,
For all at last will turn out for the best "

161

Troilus replied, as Pandar reached the door,
[illegible]
He came to her, as he was wont to do
Their usual occupations to pursue

162

And truly at the first, when there they meet,
Sorrow about their hearts doth wind and twist,
So neither may in words the other greet,
But each in other's arms each other kissed,
Thus silently they keep this mournful tryst,
For gathering woe in both their hearts so throbs,
No words can find a place among their sobs

163

The precious tears that there descend and fall
Were bitter tears, of an unnatural kind,
As though of aloes mingled or of gall
The woful Myrrha wept through bark and rind
No tears like these, as I her story find
In all this world no heart could be so hard
For such despair to lack as deep regard

164
But when their wandering weary spirits twain
Returned were to the hearts where they should dwell
And long lament had lightened so their pain
When too the bitter tears ebbed in their well,
And less the sorrows in their bosoms swell
To Troilus then Cressida thus spoke
With hoarse and halting voice that often broke

165
O Jove! O God! Thy mercy I beseech!
Help, Troilus! And therewithal her face
Upon his breast she laid bereft of speech
Her woful spirit ready to retrace
[illegible]

166
And Troilus who doth her thus behold
Calling her name to wake her from the dead,
And feeling all her limbs grow stiff and cold,
And both her eyes cast upward in her head
This Troilus was filled with mortal dread,
And many a time her lips so cold he kissed,
And prayed the Gods with comfort to assist

167
Her body on her couch he straightly laid
For now her cheeks with life no longer glow
Good reason now has he to be dismayed

168
rom loud lament he could not be restrained
And wrung his hands and said what was to say,
And on his heaving breast the salt tears rained,
[illegible]

Grant me that I shall follow soon my love!

169
How cold she was how robbed of all sensation,
Nor trace of tender breathing could he feel
Which was for him the final declaration,
As there beside her he did sadly kneel
That she had suffered now the last ordeal,
And so the body of his lady dear
He placed as one does bodies for the bier

170
[illegible]

171
[illegible]

164
But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been ther-as hem oughte dwelle,
And that som what to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With broken voys, al hoors for shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde

165
"O Jove, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!" and ther-with al hir face
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche,
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace
And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene

166
This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,
Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for deed,
With-oute answere, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed),
This sorwful man can now noon other reed,
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste,
Wher him was wo, god and him self it wiste!

167
[illegible]

But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful voys, and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world y fare!

168
So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned,
His hondes wronge, and seyd that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teres wypen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, "O lord, that set art in thy trone,
Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!"

169
She cold was and with-outen sentement,
For aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon,
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon,
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere
As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere

170
And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerd a noon out of his shethe he twighte,
[illegible]

171
Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
' O cruel Jove, and thou, Fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,

Fy on your might and werkes so diverse!
Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne,
Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.

172

For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,
Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye,
Shal never lover seyn that Troilus
Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye,
For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-fere

173

And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo,
And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al y-fere,
And thou, my moder, farewel! for I go,
And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
Receyve now my spirit!" wolde he seye,
With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye

174

175

Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,

176

And asked him, why he it hadde out-drawe?

177

Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye wolde han slayn your self anoon?" quod she
"Ye, douteless", and she answerde, "allas!
For, by that ilke lord that made me,
I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,
After your deeth, to han be crowned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene

178

179

Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,
Nought was it lyk tho nightes here-biforn,

Your might and all your evil works I curse!
Ye shall naught in this coward fashion gain,
For death shall never separate us twain!

172

One stroke of death to our two spirits give!

173

And blessed Cressida, my sweetheart dear,
Receive my soul!"—he was about to say,
With sword at heart, prepared himself to slay,

174

175

He took her in his arms and kissed her oft,
To make her glad was now his sole intent,
Until her spirit, flickering aye aloft,
Again into its harbor softly went,
But then it chanced, her glances sidelong bent,
His sword upon the floor she did espy,
As it lay bare, which drew from her a cry

176

She asked him why his sword he thus had drawn,
And Troilus the reason straightway told,
How he would slay himself therewith anon,

177

178

"But straight thy very bloody sword I'd seize
And after thee, myself I'd slay! But ho!
Enough of such sad possibilities!

179

Though in her bed reclined in love's embra
Unlike was this to nights that went before,

For sadly they behold each other's face
As though their joy was flown forevermore,
And their misfortune often they deplore
But Cressida at last took things in hand,
And thus to him her thoughts she did expand

180

"Lo, sweetheart, this you know most certainly,
That if a man does nothing but complain,
And seeks no way from trouble to be free,
That is but folly and increase of pain,
And since we've come together here, we twain,
To find a way out of the way we're in,
It seems to me, it's high time to begin

181

"I'm but a woman, as of course you know,
But my opinion *I will tell you free*
And frank, just as it comes in its first glow,
That neither you nor I, it seems to me,
Need get excited in such high degree,
Because there must be some way of redress
For all this wrong that causes us distress

182

"As it now stands, the thought that we most
hate,
The thought that robs us of all hope of bliss,
Is merely that we two must separate,
And all in all, there's nothing more amiss!
And what is then the remedy for this?
But that we manage soon again to meet!
That's all there is to it, my precious sweet!

183

[illegible]
Just briefly, and in simple words and few,
How I shall carry my proposal through

184

'But I don't want to make a long discourse,
For time once lost cannot recovered be,
And if you'll only trust to my resource,
'Twill be the best, as soon I think you'll see
And sweetheart pray you now, forgive it me,
If what I say, seems somewhat hard to you,
For truly, 'tis the best that we can do

185

"So let me here most earnestly protest
That the intent of all that I shall say
Is but to show what I regard the best,
And I believe in fact the only way
To help ourselves—and take it so I pray!
But in the end, whatever you require,
That will I do—it is my sole desire

186

"Now listen! You of course will understand,
[illegible]

For piteously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse y-lorn,
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde —

180

"Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this," quod she,
"That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encrees of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to bigenne.

181

I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.
Me thinketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully.
For there is art y-now for to redresse
That yet is mis, and sleen this hevinesse.

182

Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben
inne,
For ought I woot, for no-thing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne.
Considered al, ther nis no-more amis
But what is thanne a remede un-to this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte swete.

183

Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.
For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here, and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heep of weyes shewe.

184

For which I wol not make long sermoun,
For tyme y-lost may not recovered be,
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see.
And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
For trewely, I speke it for the beste;

185

Makinge alwey a protestacioun,
That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewe yow my mocioun,
To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye,
And taketh it non other wyse, I preye
For in effect what-so ye me comaunde,
That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde.

186

Now herkeneth this, ye han wel understonde,
My going graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be with-stonde
For al this world, as by my jugement.
And sin ther helpeth noon avysement
To letten it, lat it passe out of minde,
And lat us shape a bettre wey to finde.

187

The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne
Wol us disese and cruelliche anoye
But him bihoveth som tyme han a peyne,
That serveth love, if that he wol have joye
And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
It oughte lasse causen us to sorwe

188

So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
Sin wel ye woot that it is now a truwe,
Ye shul ful wel al myn estat y here
And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor y wonne
And me also, beth glad now, if ye conne,

189

And thenk right thus, Criseyde is now agoon,
But what! she shal come hastely ayeyn ,
And whanne, allas? by god lo, right anoon,
Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn
And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
So as we *shulle to-gederes ever dwelle*,
That al this world ne mighte our blisse telle

190

I see that ofte ther as we ben now,
That for the beste, our conseil for to hyde,
Ye speke not with me nor I with yow
In fourtenight, ne see yow go ne ryde
May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Y wis, ye mowen elles lyte endure!

191

Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
But if that onliche it my fader be,

192

Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede

193

Ye seen that every day eek, more and more,
Men trete of pees and it supposed is,
That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restore that is mis
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde

194

For if that it be pees, myn herte
dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen y fere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve

187

' Of course it s true the part ng of us twain
Most dreadfully will both of us annoy
But every lover must endure some pain
Or he would not appreciate his joy
And since I go no farther out of Troy
Then I can ride again in half a morrow
There s not much reason here to grieve or sorrow

188

For sure the Greeks will not me so immure,

189

And think What though my Cress da is gone
Twill not be long before she s back again
But when alas! I swear it right anon

190

You know with things arranged as they are now,
We re oft compelled our private life to hide
And dare no trysts or conference allow—
A fortnight thus our patience oft is tried—,
And can t you then a mere ten days abide,
My honest reputation to insure?
Of course you can or yet much more endure!

191

And don t forget that all my kin are here
Except my father who of course is not
And all my property wh ch I hold dear
And thou dearer than all the wealth I ve got
Whom I would not exchange for any lot
On all this earth so w de as earth hath space,
I swear it in the s ght of great Jove s face!

192

Do you suppose my father who is wise
Desires to see me but that he s afraid
Lest folk mistrust me here or me despise

193

You see besides how each day more and more

And so you may w th ease of heart abide
Because they treat of peace on either side

194

And when the peace shall come my sweetheart
dear
You know the town and place will be alive
With Grecian messengers who will come here
And some will go and new ones will arrive

As thick as honey bees about a hive,
And everyone will then be free to go
Wherever he will, and no one care or know.

195

"And even though the plans for peace fall through,
I must come back, for could I anywhere
Or either go or stay away from you?
And I could never stand it living there
Within a camp devoted to warfare,
And so if you regard what I have said,
I don't see why you need have any dread

196

"But I've another plan that's sure to hold
If what I've spoken of should not suffice
My father Calchas is now growing old,
And greed you know, is still an old man's vice.
And if I wanted to, I could entice
Him to our net, and I dare make the vaunt
That we shall have him doing what we want

197

"'Tis hard, *so doth the ancient proverb go,*
To fill the wolf and hold intact the sheep,
Which is to say, that often men must throw
Away a part, if they the rest will keep
With gold it's very easy to cut deep
Into the heart of him who's *set on gain,*
And what I plan to do, I'll now explain

198

"The ready cash I have here in this town,
I'll take it to my father and I'll say,
'Tis sent to him by friends to salt it down
And keep it safe against a rainy day,
And that these friends most fervently do pray
Him send for more, and the first chance embrace,
Because this town is such a risky place

199

"And what's to come shall be a huge amount—
So shall I say—and lest it be espied,
It must be sent by me on their account;
And then I'll show him, that if peace betide,
What friends I have at court on every side,
Who Priam's wrath will help to mitigate
And him in Trojan favor reinstate

200

"So what *for all the things I'll to him tell,*
I'll so enchant him, as I said before,
He'll think he doth in heaven surely dwell
That for Apollo or for his clerkly lore,
Or for his calculations by the score!
Desire of gold shall so his priestcraft blind,
I shall him 'round my finger lightly wind

201

"And if he puts to test by priestly skill
If I am lying, I'll pull him by the sleeve
And in his divinations doubt instil,
So that at last I'll lead him to believe
The oracles he wrongly doth receive,
The C[illegible] in amphib[illegible]
And tw[illegible] -lies th[illegible] these.

202

"Fear i[illegible]
And

Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;
And every wight han libertee to bleve
Wher-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.

195

And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
For which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I can not seen wher-of ye sholden drede

196

Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse.
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
With-oute net, wher-with I shal him hente,
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.

197

Lo, *Troilus, men seyn that hard it is*
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have,
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis,
Mot spenden part, the remenaunt for to save.
For ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is up-on coveityse,
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.

198

The moeble which that I have in this toun
Un-to my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye,
Whyl that this toun stant thus in jupartye.

199

And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me,
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde,
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.

200

So, what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevene *his sowle is, shal he mete!*
For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge avayleth nought three hawes,
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.

201

And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde
Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,
Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
He hath not wel the goddes understonde
For goddes speken in amphibologyes,
And, for a sooth, they tellen twenty lyes.

202

Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his coward herte

Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte
And but I make him sone to converte,
And doon my reed with-inne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye "

203

And treweliche, as writen wel I finde,
That al this thing was seyd of good entente,
And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
And was in purpos ever to be trewe,
Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe

204

This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thing devysen to and fro,
And verraylich him semed that he hadde
The selve wit, but yet to lete hir go
His herte misforyaf him ever-mo
But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.

205

For which the grete furie of his penaunce
Was queynt with hope, and ther-with hem
bitwene
[illegible]

206

[illegible]

And seyde *hir*, "*certes, if ye be unkinde,*
And but ye come at day set in to Troye,
Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne joye

207

For al so sooth as sonne up rist on morwe,
And, god! so wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol my-selven slee if that ye drecche
But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!

208

[illegible]

209

It is ful hard to halten unespyed
Biforе a crepul, for he can the craft,
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yëd,
[illegible]

[illegible] ... -day,

That he will turn completely round about,
Within a day or two you'll find this out "

203

[illegible]

And of her grief no part did she invent,
And ever thought to him she would be true,
But of her heart, not all of it she knew

204

[illegible]

205

The tempest of his grief somewhat abated,
Despair gave way to hope, and new
delight
Of love was for old sorrow reinstated,
[illegible]

Yet still the thought that Cressida must go,
[illegible]

And if you come not on your day to town,
Farewell my health my honor and renown!

207

210

'I do not know if peace shall e'er be made
But peace or no it's really all the same
For Calchas by his turning renegade
Hath so besmirched and so defiled his name
He dare not come to Troy again for shame
And so that plan so far as I can see,
Is nothing but a pleasing fantasy

211

You'll see—your father shall you so persuade
You'll marry there for he knows how to preach
For some fine Greek he'll have his plans well laid
And carry you away with his soft speech
Or make you wed by force his end to reach
And Troilus may then go hang forsooth
For all his innocence and all his truth!

212

'Yet more—your father doth us all despise
And says our city is but lost and lorn
That from this siege we never shall arise
Since all the Greeks most solemnly have sworn
We shall be slain and down our walls be torn
Such fearsome words he will unto you say
That in the end among the Greeks you'll stay!

213

'And you will see so many a lusty knight
Among the Greeks, and of such mansuetude
And each of them with heart and wit and might
To please you well abundantly imbued
That soon you'll weary of the manners rude
Of simple Trojans loosing from your mind
The bonds that our two hearts together bind

214

And this to me so grievous is to think
That from my breast the very soul 'twill rend
To lowest depths I feel my heart doth sink
But at the thought that you from Troy will wend
Against your father's cunning heaven defend!
So if you go away as I have said
You may as well count me among the dead

215

'So now with humble true and faithful heart,
A thousand times your pardon here I pray
Regard the matter, sweetheart from my part
And do somewhat as I shall to you say
And let us two in silence steal away
Bethink 'tis naught but folly pure and plain
To lose the great some minor point to gain

216

'I mean that since we may ere break of day
Steal forth and be together ever so,
What need for such uncertainty to stay,
If you hence to the Grecian army go
Of your returning here again or no?
Why should we put in pawn a joy secure
For far-off prospects, doubtful and unsure?

217

'And now to speak of low material things
Like money each of us can take along
Enough to buy what pleasures money brings,
Till death shall take us with his power strong
This do I urge this choice cannot be wrong

210

I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde,
But, pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekes syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame,
For which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye

211

Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Greek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisshen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!

212

And over al this, your fader shal despyse
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn,
And that th'assege never shal aryse,
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there

213

Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe

214

And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende,
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende,
For why your faderes sleighte wol us shende
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, with-oute more.

215

For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye,
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somwhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye,
And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
For accident his substaunce ay to lese

216

I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernesse in iupartye

217

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
Ynough to live in honour and plesaunce,
Til in-to tyme that we shul ben dede,
And thus we may eschewen al this drede.

For everich other wey ye can recorde,
Myn herte, y wis, may not ther-with acorde.

218

And hardily, ne dredeth no poverte,
For I have kin and freendes elles-where
That, though we comen in our bare sherte,
Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
But been honoured whyl we dwelten there.
And go we anoon, for, as in myn entente,
This is the beste, if that ye wole assente."

219

Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
Answerde, "y wis, my dere herte trewe,
We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
And finde swiche unthrifty weyes newe,
But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe
And help me god so at my moste nede
As causeles ye suffren al this drede!

220

For thilke day that I for cherisshinge
Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnes doughter, Juno, thorugh hir might,
As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!

221

And this on every god celestial
I swere it yow, and eek on eche goddesse,
On every Nymphe and deite infernal,
On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes been of wildernesse,
And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste
If I be fals, now trowe me if thow leste!

222

And thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere
Thorugh Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
Ber witnesse of this word that seyd is here,
That thilke day that ich untrewe be
To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule sinke in helle!

223

And your honour, god shilde us fro mischaunce!

224

And if so be that pees her-after take,
As alday happeth, after anger, game,
Why, lord! the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame!
And er that ye juparten so your name,
Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare,
For hasty man ne wanteth never care

225

What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,

With any other plan or other plea,
I cannot in my heart or mind agree

218

' Of poverty you need have not a fear,
For I have hosts of kin and friends elsewhere,
And though in our bare shirts we did appear,
In all their gold and gear they'd give us share,
And honor us the while we rested there.
So let us go, and go without delay,
I wait but till the happy word you say! '

219

Cressida paused, and said with many sighs,
' In very truth, my precious sweetheart true,

220

' If it should come, at any day or hour,
Through fear of parent or of other wight,
For rank or pride or thought of marriage dower,
That I am false, my Troilus, my knight,
Let Juno, Saturn's daughter, through her might,
Send me, as mad as Athamas to dwell
Eternally in Styx, the pit of hell!

221

222

'Thou Simois that like an arrow clear

Flow backward to thy primal source and well,
And let me soul and body sink to hell!

223

' What you propose, to slip away and go,
And leave your friends a lonely life to lead,
No woman should induce you to do so,
Especially as Troy hath now such need
Of help and of another thing take heed,
If this were known, the state would have my l
And death dishonored end all earthly strife

224

And so before you peril thus your name,
Be not too hot, or on rash action bent,
The hasty man must many times repent

225

' What think you all the people round about
Would say of it? 'Tis easy to surmise!
They d say, and think it true beyond a doubt,

Not love impelled you to such enterprise,
But lust and coward fear, and such like lies
And thus were lost, sweetheart so dear
Your honest name, which shines now bright and
 clear

226

'And also think a moment on my name,
Flourishing yet but with how dark a blot
And with what stains it would be brought to
 shame

227

'Let rashness then to reason make way here!
Men say To patience comes the victory,
And too Who will be dear he must hold dear'
Thus make a virtue of necessity!
Be patient! Think that Fortune s lord is he
Who asks no help from her in his pursuits
The coward wretch alone she persecutes

228

'Believe sweetheart with perfect confidence
Before Lucina Phoebus sister dear

229

'So must it be said Troilus at last
And since I must I will await that day,
For well I see time of debate is past!

230

'O now" cried Cressida distressedly
'Alas you drive me wild with all your fears!
It seems you have but little trust in me,
And by your words it patently appears!
In Cynthia s name so bright among the spheres
Mistrust me not for thou hast little reason
To lay against me any taint of treason

231

'Bethink you well that often it is art
To lose some time a better time to gain

232

That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede
Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so
 clere

226

And also thenketh on myn honestee,
That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde
 be,
If in thus forme I sholde with yow wende
Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende,
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne,
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne

227

And for thy slee with reson al this hete,
Men seyn, "the suffraunt overcometh," pardee,
Eek "who-so wol han leef, he leef mot lete",
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and thenk that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche,
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche

228

And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, with-outen any wene
I mene, as helpe me Juno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but-if that deeth me assayle,
I wol yow seen, with-outen any fayle"

229

"And now, so this be sooth," quod Troilus,
"I shal wel suffre un to the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus
But, for the love of god, if it be may,
So lat us stele prively away,
For ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste"

230

"O mercy, god, what lyf is this?" quod she,
"Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene!
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me,
For by your wordes it is wel y-sene
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe,
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe

231

And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne,
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two a twinne
Dryf out the fantasyes yow with inne,
And trusteth me, and leveth eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe

232

For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this, for god, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte,
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost
Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!

233

But certes, I am not so nyce a wight
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayein that day that I have hight.
[illegible]

234

For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

235

[illegible]

236

For in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrewe, as god defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
[illegible]

237

To this answerde Troilus and seyde,
"Now god, to whom ther nis no cause y-wrye,
Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde,
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with yë,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve."

238

"Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis," quod
  she,
"And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to me-ward shal rebounde.

239

For trusteth wel, that your estat royal
Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
[illegible]

240

Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt
Every thing that souned in-to badde,
As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;

233

"But I am not of such a simple mind
That I can't ferret out some easy way,
A speedy time for my return to find,
For who can hold what hath a will to stray?
My father can't, whatever tricks he play!
And take it so, my going forth from Troy
But antecedent is to greater joy!

234

"With all my heart I therefore you beseech,
If anything you'll ever grant to me,
And for the love that we have each for each,
Ere from my presence you tonight must flee,
A smile upon your features I may see,
As cheering witness to my troubled breast
That once again our hearts in union rest.

235

"And finally," she said, "one thing I pray,
[illegible]

'In love there always lies a cause for dread.'

236

[illegible]

237

"By all the Gods," cried Troilus, "above,
And all that dwell below this solid earth,
I've never swerved an instant in my love
[illegible]

238

"Have all my thanks," she said, "O sweetheart
  mine,
And blessed Venus, ere I end my days,
[illegible]

239

"Believe me well that neither vain delight,
[illegible]

240

"The gentle heart and manhood that you had,
And nobly cherished, ever in despite
Of all things leaning to the low and bad,
All coarseness and all vulgar appetite,

So that your reason bridled your delight—
For this I was above all others yours,
And shall be so, as long as life endures

And that your reson brydled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.

241

"Through length of years my love I'll not forsake,
Nor Fortune, mutable, shall e'er deface
My heart! But Jupiter, who well can make
The wretched glad, give us the happy grace
To meet again in ten nights in this place,
But now, alas, how swift the hour flies!
Farewell, dear heart, for now you must arise."

241

And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do,
Ne remuable fortune deface,
But Juppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse."

242

'Tis thus they end their long lamentings sad,
And kiss, and each in other's arms enfold,
But daylight breaks, and Troilus now clad,
Full sadly doth his lady's face behold,
As one who feels the breath of death so cold,
And with a grief that heavy on him bore,
Of last goodbyes he said to her a score

242

And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde,
. . . .
. . .
. . . .
. . . .
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

243

I doubt if any head imagine can,
Or judgment weigh, or any tongue could tell
The cruel anguish of this woful man,
Surpassing all the torments dire of hell,
Since with his lady he no more may dwell,
His heart perturbed and dark with dread portent,
Forth from her chamber, silently he went

243

For mannes heed imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment doun in helle
For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
With-outen more, out of the chaumbre he wente

HERE ENDETH THE FOURTH BOOK

BOOK V

HERE BEGINNETH THE FIFTH BOOK

1

The end approacheth of the destiny
Which Jove so long hath had in preparation,
. . .

1

Aprochen gan the fatal destinee
That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren three,
Committeth, to don execucioun,
For which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne—

2

The gold crowned Phoebus, high in heaven aloft,
Three times upon the earth below had seen
. . .

2

The golden-tressed Phebus heighe on-lofte
Thryës hadde alle with his bemes shene
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as ofte
Y-brought ayein the tendre leves grene,
Sin that the sone of Ecuba the quene
Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she departe sholde a-morwe

3

. . .
But forth from out the Trojan town must fare,
And all the weight of woe in silence bear

3

Ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
Criseyde un-to the Grekes ost to lede,
For sorwe of which she felte hir herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede
And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

4

And Troilus, a lost and wandering sprite,
From whose sad heart all happiness was fled,

4

This Troilus, with-outen reed or lore,
As man that hath his joyes eek forlore,

Was waytinge on his lady ever more
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of al his lust, or joyes here-tofore
But Troilus, now farewel al thy joye,
For shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!

5

Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde,
That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere,
But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
With certeyn folk, he hoved hir t'abyde,
So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,
That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne

6

wrecchednesse
Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?
Were it not bet at ones for to dye
Than ever-more in langour thus to drye?

7

Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
To have y nough to done, er that she go?
Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?
Why nil I sleen this Diomede also?
Why nil I rather with a man or two
S ele hir a way? Why wol I this endure?
Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?'

8

But why he nolde doon so fel a dede,
That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare
He hadde in herte alwey a maner drede,

9

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
Ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde 'allas!'

10

This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,

11

And right with that was Antenor y-come
Out of

Had thoughts but of his lady fair and bright,
Who now as ever was the fountain head
Of all his hope the cure for all his dread
But Troilus farewell to hope of joy
For thou shalt never seek her back in Troy!

5

He and her friends to do her honor bide
Though on his horse his seat he scarcely kept
For grief unknown unspoken and unwept

6

by fear
Alas he sighed that I stand idle here!
Were it not better death should end this anguish
Than evermore in lonely grief to languish?

7

Why do I not the world and all defy
And put a stop to this so hateful deed?
Why do I not all Trojan power deny?
Why do I not destroy this Diomede?
And carry her away upon my steed?
Why do I this misfortune so endure?
Why do I not risk all for my own cure?

8

But there was reason why he could not do

Now Cressida is ready forth to ride
Though far more gladly she would stay than go,
But to the Greeks she must whate er betide
And to the world a willing face must show
Thus forth she paces statelily and slow
And who can wonder that her heart should grieve,
Since all her love and joy she now must leave!

10

Return he must he may no farther go

11

For at that moment forth Antenor came
From out the Grecian host and those of Troy
Rejoiced and greeted him with loud acclaim,
And Troilus though sharing not their joy
Took heed restraining caution to employ
And let no sign of sorrow mar his face
But met Antenor with a kind embrace

12

Such greetings made, his leave he now must take.
On Cressida he cast his lingering eye
And to her side his way doth sadly make,
And took her hand to say a last goodbye,
While she, alas, doth naught but weep and sigh.
One word he softly said beneath his breath:
"Now hold your day, on that hangs life and death!"

13

His courser then he wheeled and rode away
With face all pale, and unto Diomede
No word did he or any Trojan say,
Of which the son of Tydeus took heed,
Who knew a thing or two not in the Creed.
He took the lady's bridle at his side,
While back to Troy lone Troilus must ride.

14

Now Diomede, who held her horse's bridle
When all the folk of Troy had gone away,
Reflected, "All my labor shan't be idle,
If I have anything in this to say.
'Twill help at least at putting in the day.
I've heard it said, and read it in a book,
He is a fool who doth himself overlook."

15

But Diomede was wise, with wit enough,
And mused, "I shall, I'm sure, accomplish naught
If I begin too soon, or treat her rough,
For if that man is dwelling in her thought
Whom I suppose, so soon he can't be brought
Out of her mind, but I shall find a way
So she shan't guess what game I mean to play."

16

Then Diomede, attending at her side,
Remarked to her, she seemed a trifle sad,
And hoped she would not weary of the ride,
And anything she wanted, he'd be glad
To get for her, and do whate'er she bade.
For he was hers to order and command,
Till at her father's tent-door she should stand.

17

He swore upon his honor as a knight
That nothing in the world would him more please
Than to exert himself with will and might
To add unto her pleasure and her ease,
And hoped she would grow gladder by degrees.
"Because," he said, "we Greeks will all enjoy
Your company as much as those of Troy.

18

"Just now," he said, "You feel a little strange—
No wonder, since it's all so fresh and new
From Trojan friends to Grecian friends to change,
Who all as yet are quite unknown to you.
But take my word for it, that just as true
A Greek you shall among our people find
As any Trojan, and just as well inclined.

19

"And since your friend I'll be forever steady,
As I have sworn, to help you all I can,
And since we're old acquaintances already,
And since you know me best of any man—

12

And ther-with al he moste his leve take,
And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
To take hir by the honde al sobrely.
And lord! so she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye,
"Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye."

13

With that his courser torned he a-boute
With face pale, and un-to Diomede
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;
Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,
As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente;
And Troilus to Troye homwarde he wente.

14

This Diomede, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte, "al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somwhat shal I seye,
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyd, eek tymes twyës twelve,
'He is a fool that wol for-yete him-selve.'"

15

But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough,
"That certaynly I am aboute nought,
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been y-brought
So sone awey; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene."

16

This Diomede, as he that coude his good,
Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encrese mighte or eche
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde
Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.

17

For trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with whiche he mighte hir plese,
That he nolde doon his peyne and al his might
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese;
And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde, "y-wis, we Grekes con have joye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye."

18

He seyde eek thus, "I woot, yow thinketh straunge,
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Th'aqueintaunce of these Troyanes to chaunge,
For folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never god but-if as trewe
A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Troyan is, and eek as kinde.

19

And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your freend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more aqueintaunce eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight,

So fro thus forth I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke un to your herte,

20

And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt,
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,
Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt
And if I may your harmes not redresse,
I am right sory for your hevinesse

21

And though ye Trojans with us Grekes wrothe
Han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
O god of love in sooth we serven bothe
And, for the love of god, my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me
For trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
That half so looth your wraththe wolde deserve.

22

And nere it that we been so neigh the tente
Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente,
But this enseled til another day
Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
God help me so, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Your owene aboven every creature

23

Thus seyde I never er now to womman born,
For god myn herte as wisly glade so,
I lovede never womman here-biforn
As paramours, ne never shal no mo
And, for the love of god, beth not my fo,
Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere

24

And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve,
For I have herd or this of many a wight,
Hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve
Eek I am not of power for to stryve
Ayens the god of love, but him obeye
I wol alwey, and mercy I yow preye

25

Ther been so worthy knightes in this place,
And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle
Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace
But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
So lowly ne so trewely you serve
Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve"

26

Criseide un to that purpos lyte answerde,
As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two
Hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast a two
For whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
Wel neigh doun of hir hors she gan
to sye.

27

But natheles she thonked Diomede

I mean of course among the Grecian clan—,
I hope that you will always feel quite free,
In case of any need, to call on me

20

21

You Trojans towards us Greeks are filled with hate
But so in every case it need not be,

22

But now we re drawing near your father s tent
Whose eyes I have no doubt, are turned this way,

So heaven help me while my life shall last,
In friendship yours forever firm and fast

23

24

25

place,

26

fright

27

But still she spoke her thanks to Diomede

For all his trouble and his kindly care
And for his proffered friendship which indeed

28

Again and stood submissive and discreet
And here I leave her her new life to lead,
For back to Troilus I now must speed

29

To Troy this woful Troilus returned

His comrades were afraid a word to say
For he did slight attention to them pay

30

And save his lady, all of human kind

31

To bed he goes and tosses there and turns
As does Ixion suffering deep in hell
And through *the sleepless night he there sojourns*
But then his heart a little doth unswell
Relieved by floods of tears that upward well
His lady he began now to invoke
And to himself these sorrowing words he spoke

32

O where is now my lovely lady dear?

And blindly grope, but nothing in this place,
Except a pillow find I to embrace!

33

'What shall I do? When will she come again?
God knows alas! Why did I let her go?
O would that I had perished there and then!
O precious heart O Cressida sweet foe
O lady *mine* my weeping eyes o erflow!
With all my life and soul I thee endow,
But though I die you can not aid me now!

34

'Who looks upon you now, my bright lodestar?
Who maketh now to thee his compliments?
Who comforts you away from me so far?
Now I am gone, whom give you audience?
Who troubleth now to speak in my defence?
Alas, no man! And though I grieve and pine,
As evil is your fortune as is mine!

Of al his travaile, and his goode chere,
And that him liste his friendship hir to bede,
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And wolde do fayn that is him leef and dere,
And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte,
As seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte

28

Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome,
And tweynty tyme he kiste his doughter swete,
And seyde, "O dere doughter myn, welcome!"
She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete,
And stood forth mewet, mildë, and mansuete
But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle,
And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle

29

To Troye is come this woful Troilus
In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,
With felon look, and face dispitous
Tho sodeinly doun from his hors he sterte,
And thorugh his paleys, with a swollen herte,
To chambre he wente, of no-thing took he hede,
Ne noon to him dar speke a word for drede

30

And there his sorwes that he spared hadde
He yaf an issue large, and "deeth!" he cryde,
And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
He cursed Jove, Appollo, and eek Cupyde,
He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde,
His burthe, him-self, his fate, and eek nature,
And, save his lady, every creature

31

To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth
In furie, as dooth he, Ixion, in helle,

And to him self right thus he spak, and seyde —

32

"Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere,
Wher is hir whyte brest, wher is it, where?
Wher been hir armes and hir eyen clere,
That yesternight this tyme with me were?
Now may I wepe allone many a tere,
And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
Save a pilowe, I finde nought t'enbrace

33

How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn?
I noot, *allas!* why leet ich hir to go?
As wolde god, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!
O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!
O lady myn, that I love and no mo!
To whom for ever-mo myn herte I dowe,
See how I deye, ye nil me not rescowe!

34

Who seeth yow now, my righte lodesterre?
Who sit right now or stant in your presence?
Who can conforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
Allas, no wight, and that is al my care,
For wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare

35

How shulde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
Whan I the firste night have al this tene?
How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?
For tendernesse, how shal she this sustene,
Swich wo for me? O pitous, *pale*, and grene
Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face
For langour, er ye torne un-to *this* place."

36

And whan he fil in any slomeringes,
Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
And dremen of the dredfulleste thinges
That mighte been; as, mete he were allone
In place horrible, makinge ay his mone,
Or meten that he was amonges alle
His enemys, and in hir hondes falle

37

And ther-with-al his h

38

And rewen on him-self so pitously,
That wonder was to here h

39

Who coude telle aright or ful discryve
His wo, his pleynte, his langour, and his pyne?
Nought al the men that han or been onlyve
Thou, redere, mayst thy-self ful wel devyne
That swich a wo my wit can not defyne
On ydel *for to* wryte it sholde I swinke,
Whan that my wit is wery *it* to thinke.

40

On hevene yet the sterres were sene,
Al though ful pale y-waxen was the mone;
And whyten gan the *orisonte* shene
Al *estward*, as it woned is to done
And Phebus with his *rosy* carte sone
Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare

41

This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
Ne mighte have comen Troilus to see,
Al though he on his heed it hadde y-sworn,
For with the king Pryam alday was he,
So that it lay not in his libertee
No-where to gon, but on the morwe he wente
To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.

42

For in his herte he coude wel devyne,
That Troilus al night *for sorwe* wook;
And that he wolde telle him of his pyne,
This knew he wel y-nough, with-oute book.
For which to chaumbre streight the wey he took,

35

37

And then

ng sounds his breath would make,
For so it seemed, he fell from *some* high place,
Down to the lowest depths of endless space

38

Upon h
His gr
But th
To bri
And ca his grief and his despair,
Yet such devices brought but respite brief,
And hope soon yielded way to fear and grief.

39

O, who could all his woe relate

40

stars still lingered in the *morning* sky,
But the horizon eastward glimmered
And pale

41

Now Pandar, all the livelong day before,
Had found no chance to proffer sympathy,
Although he knew h

42

For in his heart he

And there most sombrely his friend he greeted
And by him on his bed himself he seated

43
"My Pandar," then said Troilus, "the sorrow
Within my heart I may no more endure,
Today will be my last, or else tomorrow—
And of some final things I would make sure,
And most about my formal sepulture,
And will you please dispose of my estate,
As your good judgment may to you dictate

44
"And of the fire and all the funeral flames,
To which my lifeless body thou shalt feed,
And of the feast and the palaestral games
To celebrate my wake, I pray take heed
That they be good, and offer Mars my steed,
My sword my helmet, and, O brother dear,
My shield to Pallas give, the bright and clear

45
"The powdered ash to which my heart shall
burn,
I pray thee take and let it be confined
Within the vessel which men call an urn,
One made of gold, which then shall be consigned
To my fair lady, thus to keep in mind
My love and death and bid my lady dear
Preserve it as a final souvenir

46
"For now I feel approach the mortal throes,
And by my dreams both old and new I know
My time on earth is drawing near its close,
Besides the boding owl, Ascaphilo,
Two nights hath shrieked for me the third I go!
To thee, O Mercury, I now confide
My wandering soul, to be its final guide"

47
To this speech Pandar answered, 'Troilus,
Dear friend as I have told you oft before,
'Tis folly so and most egregious,
To grieve, and now of this I'll say no more,
For he who heeds advice nor other lore,
He may for all that I shall say or do,
Alone in his own juice forever stew.

48
' But Troilus, I pray thee, tell me now,
Do you believe that any such delight
In love a living man hath known as thou?
Why, yes, God knows! And many a worthy wight
Has lacked his lady for a whole fortnight,
And hath not made one half the stir and fuss!
Why must you then be so tempestuous?

49
"For you yourself, on any day, may see,
How one must leave his lady love or wife,
Through some compulsion or necessity,
Though she were dear to him as his own life,
Yet will not make *such great to-do and strife*,
For one takes such things as one takes the weather,
The best of friends can't always be together

50
"And think upon the chaps whose loves are married
By force to other men, as happens oft,

And Troilus tho sobreliche he grette,
And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.

43
"My Pandarus," quod Troilus, "the sorwe
Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.
I trowe I shal not liven til to-morwe;
For whiche I wolde alwey, on aventure,
To thee devysen of my sepulture
The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone
Right as thee semeth best is for to done.

44
But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral
In whiche my body brenne shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That al be wel, and offre Mars my stede,
My swerd, myn helm, and, leve brother dere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere

45
The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal
torne,
That preye I thee thou take and it conserve
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne,
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it hir, and do me this plesaunce,
To preye hir kepe it for a remembraunce.

46
For wel I fele, by my maladye,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certeinly, that I mot nedes dye.
The owle eek, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shright alle thise nightes two
And, god Mercurie! of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde, and, whan thee list, it fecche!"

47
Pandare answerde, and seyde, "Troilus,
My dere freend, as I have told thee yore,
That it is folye for to sorwen thus,
And causeles, for whiche I can no-more.
But who-so wol not trowen reed ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.

48
But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now,
If that thou trowe, er this, that any wight
Hath loved paramours as wel as thou?
Ye, god wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his lady goon a fourtenight,
And he not yet made halvendel the fare.
What nede is thee to maken al this care?

49
Sin day by day thou mayst thy-selven see
That from his love, or elles from his wyf,
A man mot twinnen of necessitee,
Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf,
Yet nil he *with him-self thus maken stryf.*
For wel thow wost, my leve brother dere,
That alwey freendes may nought been y-fere.

50
How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded
By freendes might, as it bi-tit ful ofte,

And seen hem in hir spouses bed y bedded?
God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe
For why good hope halt up hir herte on lofte,
And for they can a tyme of sorwe endure,
As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure

51
So sholdestow endure, and late slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and light.
Ten dayes nis so long not t abyde
And sin she thee to comen hath bihight,
She nil hir hestes breken for no wight
For dred thee not that she nil finden weye
To come ayein, my lyf that dorste I leye

52
Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye

53

54
Eek othere seyn that thorugh impressiouns,
As if a wight hath faste a thing in minde,
That ther-of cometh swiche avisiouns,
And othere seyn, as they in bokes finde,
That, after tymes of the yeer by kinde,
Men dreme, and that th effect goth by the mone,
But leve no dreem, for it is nought to done

55
Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves,
And treweliche eek augurie of thise foules,
For fere of which men wenen lese her lyves,
As ravenes qualm, or shryking of thise oules
To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is
Allas, allas, so noble a creature
As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!

56
For which with al myn herte I thee beseche,
Un to thy self that al this thou foryive,
And rys up now with-oute more speche,
And lat us caste how forth may best be drive
This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live
Whan that she cometh, the which shal be right sone,
God help me so, the beste is thus to done

57
Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye
That we han lad and forth the tyme dryve,
And eek of tyme cominge us rejoye,
That bringen shal our blisse now so blyve,
And langour of these twyës dayes fyve
We shal ther-with so foryete or oppresse,
That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse

And to a watchful husband s house are carried!
Hard hit such lovers are but take it soft
For hope survives to hold their hearts aloft
Their needful time of sorrow they endure
For time brings sorrow and brings sorrow s cure

51

And I am sure that she will come all right
You need not fear but she will find a way,
I m quite prepared my life on that to lay

52
And all your dreams and other such like folly,
To deep oblivion let them be consigned

53
Priests in the temples sometimes choose to say
That dreams come from the Gods as revelations,
But other times they speak another way
And call them hellish false hallucinations!
And doctors say they come from complications,
Or fast or surfeit or any other lie
For who knows truly what they s gnify?

54
And others say that through impressions deep

Of dream and all depends upon the moon
But all such folk are crazy as a loon!

55
Dreams are the proper business of old wives
Who draw their auguries from birds and fowls
For which men often fear to lose their lives

56
And so with all my heart I thee beseech

long
To waste the time in moping is all wrong

57

58
"This town is full of nobles here and there,
The truce will last, besides, for yet some while,
I say, let's straightway to Sarpedon fare,
The distance to his house is but a mile,
And there we can the time at ease beguile,
Until there rolls around that happy *morrow*
When she returns, whose absence is thy sorrow.

59
"Get up then, friend and brother Troilus,
For truly it is scarcely worthy thee,
Upon thy bed to weep and cower thus,
For one thing certain you can take from me,
If *thus* you lie a day *or two* or three,
The folk will say you have a coward's heart,
And but for fear you play the sick man's part."

60
"O brother dear," Troilus replied,
"They know, whose heavy hearts have suffered pain,
When times of grief and sorrow shall betide
And deep affliction burns in every vein,
Then one cannot from cries of grief abstain,
And though I wept *forever*, I have good right,
For I have lost the source of all delight

61
"But since I have to get up in the end,
I shall do so without too great delay
And meantime pray that God will kindly send
As quickly as he can the glad tenth day!
For never was there bird as fain of May,
As I shall be when *she comes* back to Troy
Who causes all my grief as well as joy

62
"But where do you suggest that we should go,
And where can we ourselves the best *amuse*?"
"My counsel is," said Pandar, "as you know,
To let Sarpedon counteract your blues"
After exchange of arguments and views,
Troilus at last thereto gave his assent,
And forth to good Sarpedon's house they went

63
Sarpedon was a *man* in arms most able,
And famed throughout all Troy for living high,
And every costly dainty for the table
For daily *entertainment* he would buy,
And nothing to his guests he would deny,
Who always said, the greatest and the least,
They never had sat down to such a feast

64
And in this world there was no instrument,
Sweet with the blast of air or touch of chord,
That skill of man could anywhere invent
For sounds that pleasure to the ear afford,
But it was heard around his festal board,
And ladies, too, to dance at his command
Were there, and ne'er was seen so fair a band

65
But what avails all this to Troilus,
Whose inward grief absorbs his every thought
And rules his heart with will imperious!
His lady's *memory* he ever sought,

58
Thus toun is ful of lordes al aboute,
And trewes lasten al this mene whyle.
Go we pleye us in som lusty route
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.
And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle,
And dryve it forth un-to that blisful morwe,
That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.

59
Now rys, my dere brother Troilus;
For certes, it noon honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bed to jouken thus.
For trewely, of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or three,
The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse,
Thee feynest syk, and that thou darst not ryse."

60
Thus Troilus answerde, "O brother dere,
This knowen folk that han y-suffred
peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful chere,
That feleth harm and smert in every veyne,
No wonder is, and though I ever pleyne,
Or alwey wepe, I am no-thing to blame,
Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.

61
But sin of fyne force I moot aryse,
I shal aryse, as sone as ever I may;
And god, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse,
So sende us hastely the tenthe day!
For was ther never fowl so fayn of May,
As I shal been, whan that she cometh in Troye,
That cause is of my torment and my joye

62
But whider is thy reed," quod Troilus,
"That we may pleye us best in al this toun?"
"By god, my conseil is," quod Pandarus,
"To ryde and pleye us with king Sarpedoun."
So longe of this they speken up and doun,
Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.

63
Thus Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh prowesse,
With al that mighte y-served been on table,
That deyntee was, al coste it greet richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste,
Was never er that day wist at any feste.

64
Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious, through wind, or touche, or corde,
As fer as any wight hath ever y-went,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladies *eek so fayr a companye*
On daunce, er tho, was never y-seyn with ye.

65
But what avayleth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe no-thing of it roughte?
For ever in oon his herte pietous
Ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.

These ladies eek that at this feste been
Sin that he saw his lady was a weye
It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen
Or for to here on instrumentz so pleye
For she that of his herte berth the keye
Was absent lo this was his fantasye
That no wight sholde make melodye

67

68

The lettres eek that she of olde tyme
Hadde him y sent he wolde allone rede
An hundred sythe a twixen noon and pryme
Refim

69

And seyde leve brother Pandarus
Intendestow that we shul here bleve
Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?
Yet were t fairer that we toke our leve
For goddes love lat us now sone at eve
Our leve take and homward lat us torne
For trewely I nil not thus so orne

70

Pandare answerde be we comen hider
To fecchen fyr and rennen hoom ayeyn?
God helpe me so I can not tellen whider
We mighten goon if I shal soothly seyn
Ther any wight s of us more fayn
Than Sarpedoun and if we hennes hye
Thus sodeinly I holde it vilanye

71

Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve
W th him a wouke and now thus sodeinly
The ferthe day to take of him our leve
He wolde wondren on it trewely
Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely
And sin that ye bihighten him to byde
Hold forward now and after lat us ryde

72

Thus Pandarus with alle peyne and wo
Made him to dwelle and at the woukes ende
Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho
And on hir wey they spedden hem to wende
Quod Troilus now god me grace sende
That I may finden at myn hom cominge
Criseyde comen and ther with gan he singe

73

'Ye hasel wode! though e this Pandare
And to him self ful softely he seyde

The lad es too n throngs assembled there
S nce his was not among the number gay
Gave h m no ease of heart though all we e fair
And on sweet nstruments to hear men play
Wh le she was absent who hath borne a vay
The key of his heart to him seemed blasphemy
And vain abuse of such sweet melody

67

Nor was there hour of all the day or n ght
When he sa d not thou h not to l stening ear
O Cress da my lovely lady br ght

68

And all the letters old that she had sent
To h m he read them when he was alone

69

Pandar sa d he what are you th nking about?

70

D d we come he e sa d Pandar fe ching fi e

We go and your so ha ty att tude
Would be I think unpa donably rude

71

Be au e we sa d that we had come to stay
A week w h h m and now in so g eat haste

72

Yes in your eye was what w se Pandar thought
And to him elf he sa d qu e soft and low

'O you'll cool off my boy if I know aught
Ere Calchas lets his daughter from him go!
But still of confidence he made a show
And said that something told him in his heart
That she would come as soon as she could start

74

And when at eve they reached the palace gate,
Down from their horses quickly they alight
And to the room of Troilus go straight
And sit them down and talk till almost night
Which talk was all of Cressida the bright
And afterward when so they felt inclined
They went to bed though first of course they dined

75

Next day before the morning lights shone clear,
Troilus awoke and leaping from his bed
He routed Pandar out his brother dear
For love of God most plaintively he said
I cannot rest until I've visited
Her house and though my eyes I cannot feast
On her I can her palace see at least

76

He found some way his household to mislead
And he and Pandar to the town then go
And to his lady's house at once *proceed*,
But Lord he only hastened to his woe!
He thought his heart with grief must overflow,
For when he saw the doors still bolted tight
Upon his horse he scarce could sit upright

77

For with one fatal glance his eyes behold
That shut is every window of the place
And at the sight his heart like ice grows cold,
Without a word and deadly pale of face
Forth by the palace doth he madly race
He spurs his horse and rides away full speed
And of no man he takes the slightest heed

78

O palace desolate he then began
O house of houses once most dear to sight!
O palace empty and accursed of man!
O lantern wherein now is quenched the light!
O dwelling once my day now turned to night!
Why dost thou stand while all my joys decay,
And she is gone, who was my hope and stay

79

'O palace once the crown of houses all
Illumined with the sun of every bliss!
O ring from which the ruby now doth fall!
O cause of woe, but cause of joy ere this!
Yet lacking better fain now *would I* kiss
Thy doorways cold if folk were not about!
Yet farewell shrine from which the saint is out!

80

On Pandar then he cast his mournful eye
With face all drawn and dreadful to behold
And interrupted oft with many a sigh
To him the *devastating* tale he told
Of sorrow new and former joys grown old
And pain sat on his countenance so grim
No heart so hard but must have pitied him

'God woot, refreyden may this hote fare
Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde!'
But natheles, he japed thus, and seyde,
And swor, y wis, his herte him wel bihighte,
She wolde come as sone as ever she mighte

74

Whan they un to the paleys were y-comen
Of Troilus, they doun of hors alighte,
And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen
And in to tyme that it gan to nighte,
They spaken of Criseyde the brighte
And after thus, whan that hem bothe leste,
They spedde hem fro the soper un to reste

75

On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere,
This Troilus gan of his sleep t'abreyde,
And to Pandare, his owene brother dere,
"*For love of god,*" *ful pitously he seyde,*
"As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde,
For sin we yet may have namore feste,
So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste."

76

And ther with al, his meynee for to blende,
A cause he fond in toune for to go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende
But lord! this sely Troilus was wo!
Him thoughte his sorweful herte braste a two
For whan he saugh hir dores spered alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe a-doun he gan to falle

77

Therwith whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was every windowe of the place,
As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde,
For which with chaunged deedlich pale face,
With-outen word, he forth bigan to pace,
And, as god wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his contenaunce aspyde

78

Than seyde he thus, 'O paleys desolat,
O hous, of houses whylom best y hight,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whylom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye,
Sin she is went that wont us was to gye!

79

O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle,
Enlumined with sonne of alle blisse!
O ring fro which the ruby is out falle,
O cause of wo, that cause hast been of lisse!
Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn *wolde I kisse*
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route,
And fare wel shryne, of which the seynt is oute!"

80

Ther with he caste on Pandarus his yë
With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde,
And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye,
Ay as he rood, to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorwe, and eek his joyes olde,
So pitously and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe

81
Fro thennesforth he rydeth up and doun
And every thing com him to remembraunce

82
And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My dere herte laughe and yonder pleye
Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully
And yonder ones to me gan she seye
Now goode swete love me wel I preye
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde
That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde

83
And at that corner in the yonder hous

My lady first me took un to hir grace

84
Thanne thoughte he thus O blisful lord Cupyde
Whanne I the proces have in my memorie
How thou me hast werreyed on every syde
Men mighte a book make of it lyk a storie
What nede is thee to seke on me victorie
Sin I am thyn and hooly at thy wille?
What joye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?

85
Wel hastow lord y wroke on me thyn ire

86
D streyne hir herte as faste to retorne
As thou dost myn to longen hir to see
Than woot I wel that she nil not sojorne
Now blisful lord so cruel thou ne be
Un to the blood of Troye I preye thee
As Juno was un to the blood Thebane
For which the folk of Thebes caughte hir bane

87
And after this he to the yates wente
Ther as Criseyde out rood a ful good paas
And up and doun ther made he many a wente
And to him self ful ofte he seyde allas
From hennes rood my blisse and my solas!
As wolde blisful god now for his joye
I mighte hir seen ayein come n to Troye

88
And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde
Allas and there I took of hir my leve!
And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde
For sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleve
And hider hoom I com whan it was eve

81
And then d straight he rode there up and down
And everything came back in memory
As he rode by the places n the town
In wh ch he once had known felicity
Lo yonder last I d d her danc ng see!
And in that temple by her eyes so clear
F rst was I caught by my own lady dear!

82
And yonder once I heard her laugh so br ght
And yonder once I sa v her lightly play
And never s nce have seen so goodly s ght!
And yonder once she came to me to say
O sweetheart mine now love me well, I pray!
And yonder such a loving glance she gave,
The thought of t w ll cheer me in my grave.

83
And at that corner house upon this street
I heard my most beloved lady dear

84
O Cup d then he thought O blessed Lord
When all these things in memory I see
Ho v thou aga nst me on all s des hast warred
It seems just like a book of hi tory!
But yet why seek a conquest over me
Since I am th ne and wholly at thy w ll?
What joy hast thou thy subjects thus to kill?

85

For a l ot which I beg a s ngle boon
That thou v t send me C ess da back soon

86

As Juno sho ed unto the Theban race
Nor let me perish here in lone d sgrace!

87
Forth to the city s open gates he rode
Whence C es da had started on her way

To see her now come r d ng back to Troy

88
As far as yonder hill, I was her gu de
And there I took of her my final leave
And the e I saw her to her father r de
The thought of wh ch my heart n two will cleave
And hither came I home when it was e…

And here bereft of every joy I dwell,
And must so bide till time makes all things well."

89

It must be bad, because he looks like sin!"
But this was all by melancholy bred,
Which spun such foolish fancies in his head.

90

At other times, in his fantastic brain,

91

Some little joy he took in song to show
The reason for his grief, as best he might,
For heavy hearts when they in words o'erflow,

92

"O star now I have lost thy cheering light,
With grief unsending may I well bewail,

93

When he had sung his song, thereafter soon
He fell again into his sighings old
And every night he gazed upon the moon,

94

"Thy horns were old upon that luckless morrow
When from this place rode forth my lady dear,
The cause of all my torment and my sorrow

95

The days stretched out, and longer every night
Seemed to this mind increasingly to grow,
And that the sun ran on his course unright,
By longer way than it was wont to go
'In truth," he said, "I fear it must be so,
That Phaeton, son of the sun, alive,
Doth still amiss his father's chariot drive!'

96

And on the city's walls he oft would walk,
And gaze where he could see the Grecian host,
And to himself in this wise would he talk,

And here I dwelle out-cast from alle joye,
And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye."

89

And of him-self imagined he ofte
To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men seyde softe,
"What may it be? who can the sothe gesse
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?"
And al this nas but his malencolye,
That he hadde of him-self swich fantasye.

90

Another tyme imaginen he wolde
That every wight that wente by the weye
Had of him routhe, and that they seyen sholde,
"I am right sory Troilus wol deye."
And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye
As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.

91

For which him lyked in his songes shewe
Th'encheson of his wo, as he best mighte,
And make a song of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.

92

"O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewayle,
That ever derk in torment, night by night,
Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
For which the tenthe night if that I fayle
The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure."

93

And seyde, "y-wis, whan thou art horned newe,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!

94

I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
For whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere,
For love of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!
For whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
Than shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!"

95

The day is more, and lenger every night,
Than they be wont to be, him thoughte tho,
And that the sonne wente his course unright
By lenger wey than it was wont to go,
And seyde, "y-wis, me dredeth ever-mo,
The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on-lyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve."

96

Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to him-self right thus he wolde talke,

"Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!
And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me bote

97
And hardely this wind, that more and more
Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore
I preve it thus, for in non othere place
Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
Fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne;
It seyth, 'allas! why twinned be we tweyne?'"

98
Thus longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
Til fully passed was the nynthe night,
And ay bi-syde him was this Pandarus,
That bisily dide alle his fulle might
Him to comforte, and make his herte light,
Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenthe morwe
That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe

99
Up-on that other syde eek was Criseyde,
With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge,
For which ful ofte a day "allas!" she seyde,
"That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
After my deeth, for now live I to longe!
Allas! and I ne may it not amende,
For now is wors than ever yet I wende.

100
My fader nil for no-thing do me grace
To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme,
And if so be that I my terme passe,
My Troilus shal in his herte deme
That I am fals, and so it may wel seme
Thus shal I have unthank on every syde;
That I was born, so weylawey the tyde!

101
And if that I me putte in jupartye,
To stele awey by nighte, and it bifalle
That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye;
Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe,
Now mighty god, thou on my sorwe rewe!"

102
Ful pale y-waxen was hir brighte face,
Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
Stood whan she dorste, *and loked on the place*
Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay
And al the night weping, allas! she lay
And thus despeired, out of alle cure,
She ladde *hir lyf, this woful creature*

103
Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
And in hir-self she wente ay portrayinge
Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe
And thus she sette hir woful herte a-fyre
Thorugh remembraunce of that she gan desyre.

104
In al this world ther nis so cruel herte

'Lo yonder lies the one I love the most!
Lo yonder the tent whence like a pining ghost
There comes this sighing breeze so gently blowing
New life upon my lifeless soul bestowing

97
And verily this wind that more and more
Increases steadily upon my face
Is from my lady's sighs, so deep and sore
In proof of which there is no other space
Of all this town but only in this place
I feel a wind that soundeth so like pain,
It saith Alas why parted are we twain! '

98
The tedious time he passes in this way
And thus survives until the last ninth night,
And Pandar still was his support and stay
Striving with all his patience and his might
To cheer his friend and make his heart more light,
Feeding his hope that on the tenth tomorrow
Cressida would come again and end his sorrow

99
Now Cressida upon the other side
In exile lone among the Greeks must dwell
And many a time a day Alas she cried
' That I was born! My wretched heart may well
Long for the tolling of my burial bell!
Alas that fortune such hostility
Should single out to show to harmless me!

100
My father will not grant me my request
For anything that I can do or say,
And Troilus as treason self confessed
Will take it if too long from Troy I stay
Nor could he see it any other way!
Thus shall I have the worst on every side,
Alas, that such fate should to me betide

101
And if the risky project I should try
To steal away by night then were I caught,
I should be taken surely for a spy
Or else indeed a still more dreadful thought
Into some ruffian's hands I might be brought
So am I lost whichever way I turn
Nor find the peace for which my heart doth yearn! '

102
Now pale and wan had grown her lovely face
Her body too with grief doth waste away
From dawn to night she gazed upon the place,
Which was her home for many a happy day,
And all the sleepless night she weeping lay,
No remedy she knew for all her care,
And day and night were sunk in black despair

103
In all this time she found her greatest ease
In keeping in her heart the image bright
Of Troilus, and his fair qualities
And all his goodly words she would recite
Since first she took him for her loving knight,
Cherishing in her woful heart the fires
Of love by such fond thoughts as love inspires.

104
In all this world so wide, no heart of stone

And here bereft of every joy I dwell,
And must so bide till time makes all things well "

89

But this was all by melancholy bred,
Which spun such foolish fancies in his head

90

At other

91

Some little joy he took

92

"O star now I have lost thy cheering light,
With grief unsending may I well bewail,
That in dark torment ever night by night
Toward certain death with favoring wind I sail!
And if the sacred tenth night there should fail
Thy beams to guide me through that fatal hour,
Charybdis shall my ship and me devour!"

93

When he had sung his song

94

"Thy horns were old upon that luckless morrow

For when thy horns anew begin to spring,
To Troy again my lady shall they bring "

95

The days stretched out and longer

96

And on the city's walls he oft would walk,
And gaze where he could see the Grecian host,
And to himself in this wise would he talk,

And here I dwelle out-cast from alle joye,
And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye "

89

And of him-self

90

Another tyme imaginen he wolde
That every wight that wente by the weye

As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.

91

For which him lyked in his songes shewe

92

"O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
With herte soor wel oughte I to bewayle,
That ever derk

93

This song when he thus songen hadde, sone
He fil ayein in to his sykes olde;

94

I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
That cause is of my torment and my sorwe,
For whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere,

95

The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on-lyve,
And that his fadres cart amis he dryve "

96

Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
And to him-self right thus he wolde talke,

112

But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat with-oute a love in Troye
For never, sithen he hir thennes broughte,
Ne coude he seen her laughe or make joye
He niste how best hir herte for t'acoye
"But for t'assaye," he seyde, "it nought ne greveth,
For he that nought n'assayeth, nought n'acheveth.'

113

Yet seide he to him self upon a night,
Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
Hir wo for love is of another wight,
And here up-on to goon assaye hir now?
I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow
For wyse folk in bokes it expresse,
Men shal not wowe a wight in hevinesse.'

114

But who-so mighte winnen swich a flour
From him, for whom she morneth night and day,
He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour "
And right anoon, as he that bold was ay,
Thoughte in his herte, ' happe, how happe may,
Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche,
I shal no more lesen but my speche "

115

This Diomede, as bokes us declare,

And som men seyn, he was of tunge large,
And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge

116

Criseyde mene was of hir stature,

117

And, save hir browes joyneden y fere,

118

She sobre was, eek simple, and wys with al,
The beste y norisshed eek that mighte be,
And goodly of hir speche in general,
Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free,
Ne never mo ne lakkede hir pitee,
Tendre-herted, slydinge of corage,
But trewely, I can not telle hir age

119

And Troilus wel waxen was in highte,
And complet formed by proporcioun
So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte,

112

But he was wary since he surely thought
That she had left some love in Troy behind

pains
For he who nothing ventures nothing gains

113

And so he said unto himself one day
Now I am not a fool! I see well how

Do not make love to those in great distress'

114

But such a flower for yourself to win
...ht and day,

115

116

117

118

In all the things which sympathy engage,
But I regret I cannot tell her age

119

And Troilus was more than middle height
But well proportioned and of figure neat
In short he seemed in everything just right,

[illegible]

120

In all the histories it is related
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
His heart was ever equal to the best,
In deeds that knightly competence attest.

121

But now let us return to Diomede
The tenth day came since that sad parting day
When to the Greeks this lady he did lead,
[illegible]

122

Now Cressida, in all things neat and nice,
Received him there, and bade him take a seat,
Nor had she any need to ask him twice,
And in the proper way a guest to treat,
Spices and wine she served in manner meet;
In friendly conversation then they fell,
A part of which I shall proceed to tell

123

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Her life among the Greeks and if their ways
Seemed strange, and how she passed her days,

124

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Gave answer to his questions as she might,
But of his deeper purpose and intent,
Perhaps she had no inkling what he meant.

125

[illegible]
Since hand upon your bridle first I laid,
When you came forth from Troy upon that morrow,
You have been sore oppressed by some deep sorrow.

126

"I cannot say just what the cause may be,
Unless perhaps some Trojan you hold dear,
Yet let me say, it truly would grieve me
If you for any Trojan, far or near,
Should ever spill a quarter of a tear,
Or let one from your face drive off the smile,
For, Cressida, it isn't worth the while

127

"The Trojans, one might say, both all and some,

Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun,
Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
On of the beste enteched creature,
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

120

And certainly in storie it is y-founde,
That Troilus was never un-to no wight,
As in his tyme, in no degree secounde
In durring don that longeth to a knight.
Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
His herte ay with the firste and with the beste
Stod paregal, to durre don that him leste.

121

But for to tellen forth of Diomede—
It fil that after, on the tenthe day,
Sin that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
This Diomede, as fresshe as braunche in May,
Com to the tente ther-as Calkas lay,
And feyned him with Calkas han to done;
But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.

122

Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
Welcomed him, and doun by hir him sette,
And he was ethe y-nough to maken dwelle.
And after this, with-outen longe lette,
The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette;
And forth they speke of this and that y-fere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.

123

He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye toun;
And of th'assege he gan hir eek byseche,
To telle him what was hir opinioun.
Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To asken hir, if that hir straunge thoughte
The Grekes gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?

124

And why hir fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hir un-to som worthy wight?
Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge
For love of Troilus, hir owene knight,
As fer-forth as she conning hadde or might,
Answerde him tho, but, as of his entente,
It semed not she wiste what he mente.

125

But natheles, this ilke Diomede
Gan in him-self assure, and thus he seyde,
"If ich aright have taken of yow hede,
Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde,
That sin I first hond on your brydel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe,
Ne coude I never seen yow but in sorwe.

126

Can I not seyn what may the cause be
But-if for love of som Troyan it were,
The which right sore wolde athinken me
That ye, for any wight that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your-selven so bigyle;
For dredelees, it is nought worth the whyle

127

The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some

In preson been, as ye your-selven see,
For thennes shal not oon on lyve come
For al the gold bitwixen sonne and see
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal not oon to mercy goon on lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyës fyve!

128

And men shul drede, un to the worldes ende,
From hennes forth to ravisshe any quene,
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene

129

And but if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn with double wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe a 'word with two visages,'
Ye shul wel knowen that I nought ne lye,
And al this thing right seen it with your yë,
And that anoon, ye nil not trowe how sone;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done

130

What wene ye your wyse fader wolde
Han yeven Antenor for yow anoon,
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde
Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I goon!
He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon
That Troyan is, and for the grete fere,
He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there

131

What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?
Lat Troye and Troyan fro your herte pace!
Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayein the beautee of your face,
That ye with salte teres so deface
For Troye is brought in swich a jupartye,
That, it to save, is now no remedye

132

Ye, lever than be lord of Greces twelve!"

133

And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
And caste a syde a litel wight his heed,
And stinte a whyle, and afterward awook,
And sobreliche on hir he threw his look,
And seyde ' I am, al be it yow no joye,
As gentil man as any wight in Troye

134

For if my fader Tydeus, he seyde,
"Y lived hadde, I hadde been, er this,
Of Calidoine and Arge a king, Criseyde!
And so hope I that I shal yet, y wis
But he was slayn, allas! the more harm is,
Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
Polymites and many a man to scathe

Henceforth forever to abduct a queen
Such vengeance on the Trojans shall be seen

129

For either Calchas tricks us with ambages,
That is with words of double meaning sly,
Such as we call a word with two visages
Or that I speak the truth none can deny
For all of this you ll see with your own eye,
And you shan t need to wait for many a moon
Mind what I say you ll be surprised how soon!

130

Do you suppose your father old and wise,
Would give Antenor for you in this war
Unless he knew just how the matter lies
And what fate for the Trojans is in store?
He knows full well that there is no hope for
A single Trojan and so he didn t dare
To let you stay among them over there

131

What further can you ask my lady dear?
Both Troy and Trojans from your heart erase!

132

Besides you shall among us Grecians find
A love more perfect and a truer knight
Than any Trojan is and one more kind

133

And with that word he blushed a bashful red
And as he spoke his voice trembled and shook
The while he turned aside and bowed h s head
And paused but soon new courage took
And w th a serious but gentle look
He said I am though this gives you no joy,
As good a gentleman as dwells in Troy

134

135

"But, lady dear, since now I am your man,
And in my heart you hold the chiefest place,
And I shall serve you every way I can,
As long as I exist in time and space,
So look upon me with a kindly face,
And grant that I may come again tomorrow
And tell you more at leisure of my sorrow"

136

Why should I all his pretty speeches tell?
He spoke enough for one day, that is sure,
And what he said to her, he said so well,
That her consent he doth at last procure
To come again, though first she did adjure
Him not to raise the topic he had broached,
At which, no doubt, he felt himself reproached!

137

But still her heart was set on Troilus,
And his dear image she could not erase
From out her mind, and so she answered thus
"O Diomede, I love that happy place
Where I was born! May heaven in its grace
Deliver it from out its sorry state
And grant to hapless Troy a happy fate!

138

"And that the Greeks on Troy their wrath would
wreak,
I know that very well! But after all,
It may not happen as you say and speak,
And God forbid that such thing should befall,
I know my father did me to him call,
And that he dearly bought me, as you say,
And for all this, I shall him well repay!

139

[illegible]

As any twixt the Orcades and Ind
And that some lady gladly would receive
Your service, that I'm ready to believe

140

"But as for love," she said, and gently sighed,
"I had a lord, and I his wedded wife,
[illegible]

That have I heard, and know you for your worth.

141

"And for that reason now I wonder,
That any woman you should trouble so!
For love and I are very far asunder,
And I am more inclined, as things now go,
To spend my life in mourning and in woe,
Though how my heart may change, I cannot tell;
The future may, of course, my grief dispel

142

"But now I am afflicted and cast down,
And you in arms are busy day by day,
But later, when you Greeks have won the town,
There's just a chance that then it happen may,

135

But herte myn, sin that I am your man,
And been the ferste of whom I seche grace,
To serven you as hertely as I can,
And ever shal, whyl I to live have space,
So, er that I departe out of this place,
Ye wol me graunte, that I may to-morwe,
At bettre leyser, telle yow my sorwe."

136

What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?
He spak y-now, for o day at the meste;
It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
For to speken with him at the leste,
So that he nolde speke of swich matere,
And thus to him she seyde, as ye may here:

137

As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus
So faste, that ther may it noon arace,
And straungely she spak, and seyde thus,
"O Diomede, I love that ilke place
Ther I was born, and Joves, for his grace,
Delivere it sone of al that doth it care!
God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!

138

That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye
wreke,
If that they mighte, I knowe it wel, y-wis.
But it shal not bifallen as ye speke;
And god to-forn, and ferther over this,
I wot my fader wys and redy is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere, I am the more un-to him holde

139

That Grekes been of heigh condicioun,
I woot eek wel, but certein, men shal finde
As worthy folk with-inne Troye toun,
As conning, and as parfit and as kinde,
As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde
And that ye coude wel your lady serve,
I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to deserve

140

But as to speke of love, y-wis," she seyde,
"I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was,
The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nis, ne never was.
And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede.

141

And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so
Eek, god wot, love and I be fer a-sonder;
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Un-to my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo
What I shal after doon, I can not seye,
But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.

142

Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy, day by day.
Here-after, whan ye wonnen han the toun,
Paraunter, thanne so it happen may,

That whan I see that I never er say,
Than wole I werke that I never wroughte!
This word to yow y-nough suffysen oughte

143

To-morwe eek wol I speke with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen nought of this matere

If that I sholde of any Greek han routhe,
It sholde be your selven, by my trouthe!

144

I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by god that sit above" —
And ther with-al she caste hir eyen doun,
And gan to syke, and seyde, 'O Troye toun,
Yet bidde I god, in quiete and in reste
I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste "

145

Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn
And fynally, whan it was waxen eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve

146

The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte
The wey, ther brode Phebus doun alighte,
And Cynthea hir char hors over raughte
To whirle out of the Lyon, if she mighte,
And Signifer his candeles shewed brighte,
Whan that Criseyde un to hir bedde wente
In with hir fadres faire brighte tente

147

Retorning in hir soule ay up and doun
The wordes of this sodein Diomede,
His greet estat, and peril of the toun,
And that she was allone and hadde nede

148

The morwe com, and goostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come un to Criseyde,
And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
So wel he for him-selve spak and seyde,
That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde
And fynally, the sothe for to seyne,
He refte hir of the grete of al hir peyne

149

150

I finde eek in the stories elles-where,

If things turn out in unexpected way,
That I shall do what I ne'er thought to do
And what I've said should be enough for you

143

'Come back tomorrow, if you so desire
But do not push this matter now too far

Who first could rouse my heart to throbs of pity

144

'I do not say I promise what you seek
Nor yet deny So do not fret nor frown,
For thou hast need to fear no other Greek!'

145

And finally, when it drew on towards eve
And all was well he rose and took his leave

146

Bright Venus soon appeared to point the way
Where Phoebus wide and round should down alight

147

Debating in her soul aye up and down

148

149

And elsewh

When deeply wounded once was Diomede,
By Troilus, she wept tears manifold
When she beheld his wide wounds freshly bleed,
And in the care of him she took great heed,
And then, to heal his wound in every part,
Men say, men say she gave to him her heart.

151

And yet the story also telleth us,
No woman ever did so deep lament
For love betrayed as she for Troilus!
"Alas," she cried, "forever lost and spent
Is all my truth in love's high sacrament!
The gentlest man, the noblest ever made
Have I in falsehood wilfully betrayed!

152

"Alas, of me unto the world's last end,
[illegible]

153

"And they will say, in scorning of all this,
That I dishonored them, alack the day,
Though I were not the first that did amiss,
That will not wipe the blot of shame away!
But since what's done, must so forever stay,
And since my former guilt I can't undo,
To Diomede at least I shall be true

154

"But Troilus, since I can do no more,
And since our paths henceforth must separate,
May heaven to its favor thee restore!
O Troilus, the best and gentlest mate
Who e'er his heart to love did consecrate,
What other love can stand in thy dear stead!"
She broke down then, and bitter tears she shed

155

[illegible]

156

How long a time it was that lay between
Ere she forsook him for bold Diomede,
No author tells, so far as I have seen,
And no man, let him ne'er so widely read,
Shall find a further record of this deed,
But Diomede, though quick enough to woo,
Before he won her, had yet more to do

157

Nor shall I now this woman further chide
Than from her simple story doth arise,
Her name, alas, is published far and wide,
Her guilt is plain enough to all men's eyes,
And if I could condone in any wise
Her deed, in pity's name I would assent,
For of her sin she did at least repent.

Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere,
Whan that she saugh his wyde woundes blede,
And that she took to kepen him good hede,
And for to hele him of his sorwes smerte.
Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte.

151

But trewely, the story telleth us,
Ther made never womman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
She seyde, "allas! for now is clene a-go
My name of trouthe in love, for ever-mo!
For I have falsed oon, the gentileste
That ever was, and oon the worthieste!

152

Allas, of me, un-to the worldes ende,
Shal neither been y-writen nor y-songe
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende,
[illegible]

153

They wol seyn, in as muche as in me is,
I have hem doon dishonour, weylawey!
Al be I not the firste that dide amis,
What helpeth that to do my blame awey?
But sin I see there is no bettre way,
And that to late is now for me to rewe,
To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.

154

But Troilus, sin I no better may,
And sin that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I god, so yeve yow right good day
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That ever I say, to serven feithfully,
And best can ay his lady honour kepe" —
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

155

[illegible]
For to seen yow in adversitee.
And giltelees, I woot wel, I yow leve;
But al shal passe, and thus take I my leve"

156

But trewely, how longe it was bitwene,
That she for-sook him for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.
Take every man now to his bokes hede;
He shal no terme finden, out of drede.
For though that he bigan to wowe hir sone,
Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.

157

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
[illegible]

158
Thus Troilus, as I biforn have told,
Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might
But often was his herte hoot and cold,
And namely, that ilke nynthe night,
Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight
To come ayein god wot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that night, no-thing to slepe him leste

159
The laurer-crouned Phebus, with his hete,
Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
To warmen of th' est see the wawes wete,
And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente,
And on *the walles of the toun they pleyde,*
To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde

160

And thus by japed stonden for to stare
Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare

161

Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne
Er that she go, god yeve his herte pyne!'

162
Pandare answerde, 'it may wel be, certeyn,
And for thy lat us dyne, I thee biseche,
And after noon than mayst thou come ayeyn"
And *hoom they go,* with-oute more speche,
And comen ayein, but longe may they seche
Er that they finde that they after cape,
Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to jape

163
Quod Troilus, "I see wel now, that she
Is taried with hir olde fader so,
That er she come, it wol neigh even be
Com forth, I wol un to the yate go
Thise portours been unkonninge ever mo,
And I wol doon hem holden up the yate
As nought ne were, al though she come late"

164
The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde
He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
And fer his heed over the wal he leyde
And at the laste he torned him, and seyde,
'By god, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!
Al most, y wis, al newe was my care

165
Now douteles, this lady can hir good,
I woot, she meneth ryden prively
I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood!
She wol not maken peple nycely
Gaure on hir, whan she comth, but softely

158
Poor Troilus as I before have told
Now lived along in any way he might

159
Phoebus the laurel crowned now shiningly
Upon his course aye higher upward went
To warm the wide waves of the eastern sea
And Nisus daughter sang the day s advent,
When Troilus his word for Pandar sent
And on the city walls they walked about
To keep for Cressida a far lookout

160
Till noon they kept their place and looked to see
Who came and every one they said as long
As he was far away was surely she
Till nearer view showed they were always wrong
For she was never one in any throng
And thus befooled this fond expectant pair
Stand on the Trojan walls and vainly stare.

161
Said Troilus Unless she comes quite soon
I must believe she couldn t get away
And won t arrive in town till afternoon

162
Pandar to this repl ed 'That may well be
And let us do the same I might suggest
And then come back to see what we can see"
So home they go and dine and briefly rest
Then back again upon their hopeless quest
They cannot see for all their straining eyes
That fortune hides from them a sad surprise

163
It looks said Tro lus as though something

164
The day goes fast night falls on land and sea,
And Cress da she cometh not he said

165
But now I know just what she doth intend—

By night into the town she means to ride,
And her good pleasure we must so abide

166

"In fact there's nothing else that we can do
But Pandar, look! What is it there I see?
She's come at last, it's too good to be true!
[illegible]

167

[illegible]

168

"It may be" answered Pandar, "well enough,"
Nor any of his empty hopes denied,
Though in his heart he thought it silly stuff,
[illegible]

169

The warden of the gates began to call
The folk without the fosses to prepare
To drive into the town their cattle all
Or through the night they must remain out
there,
And in the dusk, *with heart oppressed by care*,
Troilus turns at last homeward to ride,
For now why should he longer there abide!

170

[illegible]

Before the silver moon, my own sweetheart,
Shall pass the Lion and from the Ram depart,'

171

"And so it may yet turn out for the best"
And on the morrow, to the gate he went,
[illegible]

He went back home in disappointment sore.

172

Now hope delusive took its final flight,
For all that he had sought had turned out wrong,
Upon his heart there fell a deadly blight,
So were his *silent sorrows sharp and strong*,
For when he saw she stayed away so long,
He dared not to himself or think or say
Why she should fail to keep her promised day

173

The third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth succeed,
Since the appointed ten days by had rolled,

By nighte in-to the toun she thenketh ryde
And, dere brother, thenk not longe t' abyde.

166

We han nought elles for to doon, y-wis
And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?
Have here my trouthe, I see hir! yond she is
Heve up thyn eyen, man! maystow not see?"
Pandare answerde, "nay, so mote I thee!
Al wrong, by god, what seystow, man, wher art?
That I see yond nis but a fare-cart"

167

"Allas, thou seist right sooth," quod Troilus,
"But hardely, it is not al for nought
That in myn herte I now rejoyse thus.
It is ayein som good I have a thought.
Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought,
Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye,
She comth to-night, my lyf, that dorste I leye!"

168

Pandare answerde, "it may be wel, y-nough",
And held with him of al that ever he seyde,
But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,
And to him-self ful sobrely he seyde
"From hasel-wode, ther Joly Robin pleyde,
Shal come al that that thou abydest here,
Ye, fare-wel al the snow of ferne yere!"

169

The wardein of the yates gan to calle
The folk which that with-oute the yates were,
And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,
Or al the night they moste bleven
there.
And fer with-in the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde,
For wel he seeth it helpeth nought t'abyde.

170

But natheles, he gladded him in this,
He thoughte he misacounted hadde his day,
And seyde, "I understonde have al a-mis.
[illegible]

171

For which she may yet holde al hir biheste"
And on the morwe un-to the yate he wente,
And up and down, by west and eek by este,
Up-on the walles made he many a wente
But al for nought, his hope alwey him blente;
For which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore
He wente him hoom, with-outen any more.

172

This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wher-on now lenger for to honge,
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte *bledde,*
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
For when he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he juggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.

173

The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,

Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet som-what trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,
He can now seen non other remedye,
But for to shape him sone for to dye.

174

Ther-with the wikked spirit, god us blesse,
Which that men clepeth wode jalousye,
Gan in him crepe, in al this hevinesse;
For which, by-cause he wolde sone dye,
He ne eet ne dronk, for his malencolye,
And eek from every companye he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.

175

He so defet was, that no maner man
Unnethe mighte him knowe ther he wente;
So was he lene, and ther-to pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus him-selven shente.
And who-so axed him wher-of him smerte,
He seyde, his harm was al aboute his herte.

176

Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustren gonne him freyne
Why he so sorwful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
A-boute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.

177

So on a day he leyde him doun to slepe,
And so bifel that in his sleep him thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
For love of hir that him these peynes wroughte;
And up and doun as he the forest soughte,
He mette he saugh a boor with tuskes grete,
That sleep ayein the brighte sonnes hete.

178

And by this boor, faste in his armes folde,
Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde:
For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
And for despyt, out of his slepe he breyde,
And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde,
'O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!
I nam but deed, ther nis non other bote!

179

My lady bright Criseyde hath me bitrayed,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elles-where hath now hir herte apayed;
The blisful goddes, through hir grete might,
Han in my dreem y-shewed it ful right.
Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde"—
And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.

180

"O my Criseyde, allas! what subtiltee,
What newe lust, what beautee, what science,
What wratthe of juste cause have ye
to me?
What gilt of me, what fel experience
Hath fro me raft, allas! thyn advertence?
O trust, O feyth, O depe asseurance,
Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my plesaunce?

And hope and dread still battle for the lead,
Nor could he quite reject her pledges old,
But then he saw her word she would not hold,
And this last woe completely filled his cup,
And he had nothing now to keep his courage up

174

The dark and wicked mood of jealousy,
Which drives men on until they grow insane,
Crept in his heart to keep grief company,
And from all food and drink he did abstain,
As one who on this earth would not remain,
A lonely melancholy life he led
And from companionship he turned and fled.

175

A sick man now, his body's powers fail,
He seems a stranger even to his friends,
So thin and gaunt, of face so wan and pale,
Upon a staff he weakly now depends,
For thus black care achieves its evil ends;
And if one asked him how it all did start,
He said he had some trouble with his heart

176

Priam inquired, and so his mother dear,
His brothers and his sisters, too, did ask,
Why he should always be so sad and drear,
And for his good they took him oft to task;
But still his grief he ever sought to mask,
And said about his heart he felt such pain
As mortal body could not long sustain

177

It chanced one day he laid him down to sleep,
And in his restless slumber, so he thought,
Within a wood he went to walk and weep,
For love of her who all this wrong had wrought,
And down a path, his eyes a vision caught,
A tusked boar appeared in his sad dreams,
Asleep and lying in the bright sunbeams,

178

And by this boar, whom in her arms she held,
Lay Cressida, kissing the fearsome beast
And suddenly this vision strange expelled
All sleep and from his dreaming thus released,
Troilus knew all hope for him had ceased
O Pandar cried he, now I know the worst!
I am a man abandoned and accursed!

179

My lady Cressida hath me betrayed,
In whom was all my trust and my delight;
Her love she hath elsewhere conveyed!
The blessed Gods above through their great migh
Have in my dreams revealed it to my sight!
Thus in my dreams I did my love behold—"
And all the tale to Pandar he then told

180

'O Cressida, what baseless treachery,
What lust of heart, what beauty or what wit—,
What wrath with just cause have you felt
towards me?
What guilt in me, what thoughts or deeds unfit
Have caused thy heart away from me to flit?
O trust! O faith! O hopes that life inspire!
O who hath robbed me of my heart's desire!

181

That every word was Gospel that you said
But treason oft doth show its hateful face
In those in whom the greatest trust we place

182

"What shall I do? What now is left for me?
There falls on me anew so sharp a pain,
For which there can be found no remedy,
Better to kill myself with these hands twain
Than in this life of misery remain!
Death at the least a final peace will send,
But life is daily death that hath no end!'

183

Then Pandar answered him "Alas the while
That I was born! Have I not said ere this,

And what they mean, you never can make clear

184

"This dream that you have had about a boar,
It well may be that it doth signify
Her father, old and of his head so hoar,
Who near his death doth in the warm sun lie,
While she for natural grief must weep and cry,
And kiss him as he lies there on the ground—
This is the way you should your dream expound"

185

"Perhaps" said Troilus 'I wish I knew
For certain how to judge my dream aright"
"I'll tell you then,' said Pandar, 'what to do!
Since you know well enough how to endite,
Bestir yourself and to your lady write
I know no better way of finding out
The truth and freeing so your mind of doubt

186

"That way you'll know just how things stand, for better
Or worse, for if untrue she means to be,
She will not send an answer to your letter,
And if she writes, then you can quickly see
If she to come again to Troy is free,
And if she's let and hindered in some way,
She will explain it all as clear as day

187

To ease your mind and set your doubts at rest."

188

Troilus to this advice can but agree,
For other plan he has none to propose,
Nor long delays, but sits down hastily,
Debating in his heart the cons and pros

181

Allas! why leet I you from hennes go,
For which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?
Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
God wot I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,
That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
But who may bet bigylen, if him liste,
Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?

182

What shal I doon, my Pandarus, allas!
I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne,
Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
My-selven slow, than alwey thus to pleyne
For through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende,
Ther every day with lyf my-self I shende."

183

Pandare answerde and seyde, "allas the whyle
That I was born, have I not seyd er this,
That dremes many a maner man bigyle?
And why? for folk expounden hem a-mis.
How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is,
For any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?
Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.

184

Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor,
It may so be that it may signifye
Hir fader, which that old is and eek hoor,
Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye,
And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye,
And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde,
Thus shuldestow thy dreem a-right expounde"

185

"How mighte I thanne do?" quod Troilus,
"To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?"
"Now seystow wysly," quod this Pandarus,
"My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte,
That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute,
To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute.

186

And see now why, for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she untrewe be,
I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayeyn.
And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see,
As whether she hath any libertee
To come ayein, or elles in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.

187

Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente,
That hardely thou wolt thy-selven seye,
That hir a-bood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
A sothe of al, ther is no more to done."

188

Acorded been to this conclusioun,
And that anoon, these ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,

How he may best discryven hir his wo
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere,
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here

189
"Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
With-outen part of elles where servyse,
With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al,
I woful wight, in every humble wyse
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde un to your noble grace

190
Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon
That ye me lafte in aspre peynes smerte,

191

192
Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde,

193
If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Up-on his lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in ost sojourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne

194
But for as muche as me mot nedes lyke
Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
But humblely with sorwful sykes syke,
Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,
Fro day to day desyring ever more
To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there

195
The whos wel fare and hele eek god encresse
In honour swich, that upward in degree
It growe alwey, so that it never cesse,
Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
Devyse, I prey to god so mote it be
And graunte it that ye sone up-on me rewe
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe

196
And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,

How he may best portray to her his woes,
And thus to Cressida his lady dear
He wrote this letter as follows here

189
Flower of my life whom I do rightly call
Sole sovereign of my every act and deed
With body and soul with will and thought and all
I wretched man answering every need
That tongue may tell or heart may ever plead
As far as matter occupieth space
I wretched man beseech of you your grace!

190
And let me now recall my own sweetheart,
How long a lonely time has passed away
Since you left me pierced with the bitter dart
Of pain for which no help nor stay
Have I yet had but ever worse from day
To day and so must I forever dwell
Until you come my sorrow to dispel

191
Are tears which from my eyes upon it rain
And let them plead my sorrow not in vain!

192
The first I beg is that with eyes so clear
You ll look at this and hold it not defiled

And so forgive them me my own sweetheart

193
If any lover ever durst with right
Upon his lady chargefully complain

Yet in two months you do not yet return

194
But since in all things I must to you yield,
I may say nothing further on this score
Yet humbly and with sorrow unconcealed,
I here set forth all my affliction sore
From day to day desiring ever more
To know in full how with the Greeks you fare,
And what you have been doing over there

195

196
And if you would know how in Troy I fare,
Whose griefs now at their pinnacle arrive

I can but say, that borne upon by care,
The time I wrote this, I was yet alive,
Yet ready, too, with swift death to connive,
Which I hold off, and from me briefly fend,
Until I see what word to me you send

197

I am my own accursed adversary,
And every joy turns into its contrary

198

"But when you come back home again to Troy,

fate by doing wrong,

Pray write then, sweet, and make the matter plain,
With hope, or death, deliver me from pain!

201

'But I must warn you, my own sweetheart true,
When you again your Troilus shall see,
So much has changed his frame and all his hue,

I well could write,

And now a last farewell, my own sweetheart
Le vostre T."

I can no more but, cheste of every care,
lettre I was on-lyve,

Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,
Of sorweful teres salte arn waxen welles,
My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
My good in harm, myn ese eek waxen helle is

Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
Ye may redresse, and, more a thousand sythe
Than ever ich hadde, encresen in me joye.
For was ther never herte yet so blythe
To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
As I yow see, and, though no maner routhe
Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.

199

hath deeth deserved,

If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
That with your lettre ye me recomforte,
For though to me your absence is an helle,
I wol my wo comporte,

Y-wis, myn owene dere herte trewe,
I woot that, whan ye next up-on me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe,

202

I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may;
But whether that ye do me live or deye,
Yet pray I god, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde

203

With hele swich that, but ye yeven me
hele have,

Le vostre T."

204

This lettre forth was sent un-to Criseyde,
Of which hir answere in effect was this,
Ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That al so sone as that she might, y-wis,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whanne.

205

But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, and swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmelees bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee lest,
Thus gooth the world, god shilde us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

206

207

This dreem, of

208

For which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute,
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute,
And fynally, with-inne a litel stounde,
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem expounde.

209

She gan first smyle, and seyde, "O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos, how that fortune over-throwe
Hath lordes olde, through which, with-inne a throwe,
Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kinde
He comen is, as men in bokes finde

210

Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire
For Grekes nolde doon hir sacrifyse,
Ne encens up-on hir auter sette a-fyre,
She, for that Grekes

211

To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
A monges which ther com, this boor to see,
A mayde, oon of this world the best y-preysed,

204

To Cressida this letter straight was sent,
To which her answer was to this effect
Her long delay she sadly did lament,
And said that she would come when good prospect
She found, and what was wrong would all correct,
And finally she wrote and told him then
That she would come, O yes, but knew not when

205

Cressida hath left thee here the bag to hold!
Thus goes the world! God shield us from disaster,
And of our fates may each of us be master!

206

Nor ate, nor drank, nor slept, nor speech essayed,
And thought upon the curse of fortune blind,
Until all reason fled from out his mind

207

Of her untruth and his disastrous fate—
All which the boar was meant to indicate

208

Then for his sister Sibly straight he sent,

209

Which tell how fortune once did overthrow
Some lords of old, and thereby I shall show
And tell you whence this boar, and of what kind,
As in the books the story you may find

210

"Diana, filled with anger and with ire,
Because the Greeks withheld her sacrifice,
Nor on her altar set incense afire,
In vengeance made them pay a cruel price,
And this, in long and short, was her device,
She let a boar, as great as ox in stall,
Devour their growing corn and vines and all.

211

'To slay this boar the countryside was raised,
And thereamong came one, the boar to see,
A maiden whom all in that region praised;

And Meleager, lord of that country,
So loved this maiden, fair and fresh and free,
That into battle with this boar he went,
And killing it, its head unto her sent.

212

"From this, as ancient writers tell to us,
There rose a contest and a warfare high,
And from this lord descended Tydeus,

213

How Tydeus made warfare Sibyl told,

214

She also told about Haemonides,
When Tydeus slew fifty knights so stout,
And told of all the wondrous prophecies,
And how the seven kings for Thebes set out,
And then besieged the city round about,
And of the holy serpent and the well,
And of the Furies, all this did she tell,

215

And Archemorus' death and funeral plays,
And how Amphiorax fell through the ground,
How Tydeus was slain and closed his days,
And also how Ipomedon was drowned,
And Parthenope final death wound found,
And how Capaneus, the strong and proud,
Was slain by stroke of thunder, sounding loud

216

And then she told the tale how either brother,
Eteocles and Polynices true,
How each of them in skirmish killed the other,
And how Argia wept and made ado,
The burning of the town did she review,
And so descended down from stories old
To Diomede, and of him thus she told

217

"This boar you dreamed of stands for Diomede,
Tydeus' son, of Meleager's line,
Who killed the boar and won fame by that deed;
Thy lady, if in fact she once was thine,
With Diomede in love doth now combine;
Be glad or sad, but there can be no doubt,
This Diomede is in and you are out"

218

"That isn't true," he cried, "thou sorceress!

219

"As well defame the beautiful Alceste,

And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He lovede so this fresshe mayden free
That with his manhod, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;

212

Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus

213

She toldè eek how Tydeus, er she stente,
Un-to the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyme kingdom of the citee, wente,
For his felawe, daun Polymites,
Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles,
Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe;
This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe

214

She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
Whan Tydeus slough fifty knightes stoute.
She tolde eek al the prophesyes by herte,
And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
Bisegeden the citee al aboute,
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies, al she gan him telle

215

Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde,
And also how Cappanëus the proude
With thonder-dint was slayn, that cryde loude.

216

She gan eek telle him how that either brother,
Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,

217

"This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.

218

"Thou seyst nat soth," quod he, "thou sorceresse,
With al thy false goost of prophesye!
Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse,
Now seestow not this fool of fantasye

As wel thou mightest lyen on Alceste,

That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste
For whanne hir housbonde was in jupartye
To dye him self, but if she wolde dye,
She chees for him to dye and go to helle,
And starf anoon, as us the bokes telle"

220

Cas andre gan h...

221

Fortune whiche that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe Jove, as regnes shal ben flitted
Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pulle awey the fetheres brighte of Troye
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of joye

222

Among al this, the fyn of the parodie
Of Ector gan approchen wonder blyve,
The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie,
And shap n hadd...

223

For which me thinketh every maner wight
That haunteth armes oughte to biwayle
The deeth of h...

224

For whom...

That what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,
Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste

225

But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre,
And dradde ay that his lady was untrewe,
Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre
And as these lovers...

226

And of tyme...

For him she chose to die and go to hell
And in his stead among the dead to dwell

220

The truth of what he must henceforth endure
And in the truth to find his death or cure

221

Fortune controller of the permutation

222

Great Hector drew near to his period s end
Wh ch all too soon for Troy must now arrive,
Forth from his body fate his soul would send
And sought a means upon its way to drive
It hence against which he in vain might strive
For into battle on a day he went
Which ended only when his life was spent

223

Now every man it seems to me but right
Who follows arms should heartily bewail

224

225

Nevertheless for all his grim despa r
For all his fear h s lady was untrue
Yet still his mind and thought turned ever there,
And l ke all lovers still he sought anew
To justify his lady br ght of hue
And to excuse her he would often say
That Calchas was the cause of this delay

226

227

To Cressida he often wrote anew,
[illegible]

228

"Thou son of Cupid, model of all that's good,
Thou sword of knighthood, valor's primal source,
Pray how may she who long herself hath stood
In torment, sorrow from thy heart divorce?
Behold me, sad and sick, with no recourse,
Since you with me nor I with you may deal,
But helpless grief within me to conceal

229

"Your letters ample and your paper plaints
Have deeply moved my heart to sympathy,
The stains of tears that broke their long restraints,
These have I seen, but what you ask of me,
To come to Troy, just now that cannot be,
Yet why, since someone may this letter seize,
I cannot here explain to you with ease

230

"Grievous to me, God knows, is your unrest,
And what the Gods have ordered and ordained,
It seems you take it not as for the best,
And all the thought you have in mind retained
Is but of present pleasure unrestrained,
But for all that, I say 'tis only fear
Of wicked tongues that makes me linger here

231

"For I have heard things much to my surprise,
Concerning you and me, and how we stand,
Which calls for cautious action and for wise,
And I have heard that you have merely planned
To hold me at your beck and your command,
But let that pass—I can but in you see
All truth, and gentleness and honesty

232

[illegible]
My friendship to you I do here assure

233

"And I must ask you that you do not take
[illegible]
The meaning counts, and not the letters' space
So fare you well! God grant to you his grace!
La vostre C."

234

This letter Troilus thought rather strange,
And read it with a sad and thoughtful sigh,
For therein saw he many signs of change,

227

To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
Ful pitously, he lefte it nought for slouthe,
Bisechíng hir that, sin that he was trewe,
She wolde come ayein and holde hir trouthe.
For which Criseyde up-on a day, for routhe,
I take it so, touchinge al this matere,
Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here

228

"Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlihede,
O swerd of knighthod, sours of gentilesse!
How mighte a wight in torment and in drede
And helelees, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
I hertelees, I syke, I in distresse,
Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele

229

Your lettres ful, the papir al y-pleynted,
Conseyved hath myn hertes pietee,
I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted
[illegible]

230

Grevous to me, god woot, is your unreste,
Your haste, and that, the goddes ordenaunce,
It semeth not ye take it for the beste.
Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your plesaunce.
But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche,
For that I tarie, is al for wikked speche

231

For I have herd wel more than I wende,
Touchinge us two, how thinges han y-stonde;
Which I shal with dissimulinge amende
And beth nought wrooth, I have eek understonde,
How ye ne doon but holden me in honde
But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentilesse

232

Comen I wol, but yet in swich disjoynte
I stonde as now, that what yeer or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte
But in effect, I prey yow, as I may,
Of your good word and of your friendship ay.
For trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure,
As for a freend, ye may in me assure.

233

Yet preye I yow on yvel ye ne take,
That it is short which that I to yow wryte;
I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make
Ne never yet ne coude I wel endyte.
Eek greet effect men wryte in place lyte.
Th'entente is al, and nought the lettres space;
And fareth now wel, god have you in his grace!
La vostre C."

234

Thus Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwefully he sighte,
Him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of chaunge;

235

That Troilus wel understood that she
Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be
And fynally, he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath been aboute.

236

Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troilus, and in suspecioun
Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.
And so bifel, that through-out Troye toun,
As was the gyse, y-bore was up and doun
A maner cote-armure, as seyth the storie,
Biforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie,

237

The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde y-rent from Diomede
The same day, and whan this Troilus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avysing of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk, but as he gan biholde,
Ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde.

238

As he that on the coler fond with-inne
A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troye moste nedes twinne,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorwe·
And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe
To keep it ay, but now, ful wel he wiste,
His lady nas no lenger on to triste

239

He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende
For Pandarus, and al this newe chaunce,

240

Than spak he thus, "O lady myn Criseyde,
Wher is your feth, and wher is your biheste?
Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe?" he seyde;
"O Diomede have ye now al this feste!
Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste,
That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
That ye thus nolde han holden me in hondel

241

Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this,

242

Was ther non other broche yow liste lete

235

But ever must a time come at the last
When truth will out for every man to see;
For now the day approaches, sure and fast,
When Troilus must realize that she
Was not as constant as she ought to be,
And that the love and faith that seemed so sure,
Were not so true that they could long endure.

236

As happened oft with trophies of renown,
Before Deiphebus for all to see
An armor cloak was born in victory.

237

This cloak, as Lollius explains to us,

238

And pledged to keep it aye, but now he knew
That to her word and him she was untrue.

239

240

"O Cressida," he cried, "O lady bright,

241

An evil eminence for thee hath won!

242

"Was there no other brooch that you might use

I trust all men will take thee as they should—
But now to come back where my story stood

258

The wrath of Troilus, as I have said,
The *Grecian warriors* had to pay for dear,
And hosts of Greeks his valiant hand struck dead,
Though in his time he was without a peer
Within the city, yet the fatal spear
Of bold Achilles, as the Gods had willed,
At early last this Trojan hero killed.

259

And when his final earthly breath he drew,
His spirit from his body lightly went
And to the eighth sphere's hollow concave flew
Leaving in convex every element.
And then he saw *in glorious ascent*
The wandering stars, and heard the harmony
Of all the spheres *in heavenly melody*.

260

And down from thence he cast his spirit's eyes
Upon this spot of earth, that with the sea
Is bound, and now doth heartily despise
This wretched world, with all its vanity,
In contrast with the joy in full degree
Of heaven above, and at the very last
His gaze where he was slain, he downward cast.

261

Silently he laughed to see the grief and woe
Of those who weep within this earthly space,
Renouncing all men's works, who only know
Those earthly joys which time shall soon efface,
In peace content with heaven's lasting grace.
His way he went, in rest no tongue can tell
Where Mercury appointed him to dwell.

262

Thus ended, lo, the love of Troilus,
Thus ended, lo, this model of mankind,
His royal rank led to such end, and thus
Ended his high nobility of mind,
For this false world, so mutable and blind,
'Twas thus his love for Cressida began
And thus until he died its full course ran.

263

Ye youth, so happy at the dawn of life
In whom love springs as native to your days,
Estrange you from the world and its vain strife,
And let your hearts their eyes to him upraise
Who made you in his image! Give him praise
And think this world is but a passing show
Fading like blooms that all too briefly blow.

264

And love ye him who on the cross did buy
Our souls from timeless death to live for aye
Who died and rose and reigns in heaven high!
Your deepest love his love will never betray
Your faith on him *I bid you safely lay*
And since his love is best beyond compare
Love of the world deny with all its care.

265

Here, lo, the vanity of pagan rites!
Lo here, how little all their shrines avail!
Lo here the end of worldly appetites!

That thou be understonde I god beseche!
But yet to purpos of my rather speche —

258

The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere,
For thousandes his hondes maden deye,
As he that was with-outen any pere,
Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here
But weylaway, save only goddes wille,
Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.

259

And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
In convers letinge every element,
And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye

260

And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse
This litel spot of erthe, that with the see
Enbraced is, and fully gan despyse
This wrecched world, and held al vanitee
To respect of the pleyn felicitee
That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
Ther he was slayn, his loking doun he caste,

261

And in him self he lough right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste,
And dampned al our werk that folweth so
The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
And sholden al our herte on hevene caste
And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle —

262

Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,
Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse,
Swich fyn hath his estat real above,
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse,
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde

263

O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte up-casteth the visage
To thilke god that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.

264

And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,
First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene a-bove,
For he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?

265

Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle,
Lo here, these wrecched worldes appetytes,

Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille
Of Jove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche —

266

O moral Gower, this book I directe
To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benignitees and zeles gode
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preye,
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye·

267

Thou oon and two, and three, eterne on lyve,

For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne! Amen

266

O moral Gower to thee this book I send
And to thee too thou philosophical Strode
And beg if need be ye will it amend
And have my thanks for all such care bestowed
To Christ the crucified whose blood hath flowed
For us for mercy now I humbly pray
And to the highest Lord these words I say

267

O Thou Eternal Three and Two and One
Reigning forever in One and Two and Three
Boundless but binding all through Father and Son
From foes unseen and seen deliver me
And blessed Jesus turn our love to thee
And through thy maiden Mother meek and mild
Let all our hearts to thee be reconciled!

HERE ENDETH THE BOOK OF

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA



CONTENTS

THE CANTERBURY TALES

Full worthy was he in his liege lord's war,
And therein had he ridden (none more far)
As well in Christendom as heathenesse,
And honoured everywhere for worthiness
At Alexandria, he, when it was won,
Full oft the table's roster he'd begun
Above all nations' knights in Prussia
In Latvia raided he, and Russia,
No christened man so oft of his degree
In far Granada at the siege was he
Of Algeciras, and in Belmarie [1]
At Ayas was he and at Satalye[2]
When they were won, *and on the Middle Sea*
At many a noble meeting chanced to be
Of mortal battles he had fought fifteen,
And he'd fought for our faith at Tramissene[3]
Three times in lists, and each time slain his foe.
This self same worthy knight had been also
At one time with the lord of Palatye[4]
Against another heathen in Turkey
And always won he sovereign fame for prize.
Though so illustrious, he was very wise
And bore himself as meekly as a maid
He never yet had any vileness said,
In all his life, to whatsoever wight
He was a truly perfect, gentle knight
But now, to tell you all of his array,
His steeds were good, but yet he was not gay
Of simple fustian wore he a jupon
Sadly discoloured by his habergeon,
For he had lately come from his voyage
And now was going on this pilgrimage

Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye [1]
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,[2]
Whan they were wonne, and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene[3]
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,[4]
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

THE SQUIRE

With him there was his son, a youthful squire,
A lover and a lusty bachelor,
With locks well curled, as if they'd laid in press
Some twenty years of age he was, I guess
In stature he was of an average length,
Wondrously active, aye, and great of strength.
He'd ridden sometime with the cavalry
In Flanders, in Artois, and Picardy,
And borne him well within that little space
In hope to win thereby his lady's grace.
Prinked out he was, as if he were a mead,
All full of fresh-cut flowers white and red
Singing he was, or fluting, all the day,
He was as fresh as is the month of May
Short was his gown, with sleeves both long and wide.
Well could he sit on horse, and fairly ride
He could make songs and words thereto indite,
Joust, and dance too, as well as sketch and write
So hot he loved that, while night told her tale,
He slept no more than does a nightingale
Courteous he, and *humble, willing and able,*
And carved *before his father at the table*

With him ther was his sone, a young Squyer,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale
Curteys he was, *lowly, and servisable,*
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

THE YEOMAN

A yeoman had he, nor more servants, no,
At that time, for he chose to travel so;

A Yeman hadde he, and servaunts namo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;

[1] Benmarin (the name of a tribe) in Morocco. [2] Modern Adalia in Asia Minor.
[3] Modern Tlemçen, in Algeria [4] Modern Balat

And he was clad in cote and hood of grene,
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere,
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

His arrows had no draggled feathers low),
And in his hand he bore a mighty bow
A cropped head had he and a sun browned face.
Of woodcraft knew he all the useful ways

A forester he truly was, I guess.

THE PRIORESS

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioress,

After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,

That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.

And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte
And al was conscience and tendre herte.

It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe,
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

Full well she sang the services divine,
Intoning through her nose, becomingly,
And fair she spoke her French, and fluently,
After the school of Stratford at the Bow,

Not dipped her fingers deep in sauce, but ate
With so much care the food upon her plate
That never driblet fell upon her breast
In courtesy she had delight and zest
Her upper lip was always wiped so clean
That in her cup was no iota seen
Of grease, when she had drunk her draught of wine.
Becomingly she reached for meat to dine
And certainly delighting in good sport,
She was right pleasant, amiable—in short
She was at pains to counterfeit the look
Of courtliness, and stately manners took,

Caught in a trap, though it were dead or bled

But certainly she had a fair forehead,

And under, *Amor vincit omnia*

THE NUN, THE THREE PRIESTS, AND THE MONK

Another little nun with her had she,
Who was her chaplain, and of priests she'd three.
A monk there was, one made for mastery,
An outrider,[1] who loved his venery,
A manly man, to be an abbot able
Full many a blooded horse had he in stable
And when he rode men might his bridle hear
A jingling in the whistling wind as clear,
Aye, and as loud as does the chapel bell
Where this brave monk was master of the cell.[2]
The rule of Maurus or Saint Benedict,
By reason it was old and somewhat strict,
This said monk let such old things slowly pace
And followed new world manners in their place
He cared not for that text a clean plucked hen
Which holds that hunters are not holy men,
Nor that a monk, when he is cloisterless,
Is like unto a fish that's waterless,
That is to say, a monk out of his cloister
But this same text he held not worth an oyster,
And I said his opinion was right good
What? Should he study as a madman would
Upon a book in cloister cell? Or yet
Go labour with his hands and swink and sweat,
As Austin[3] bids? How shall the world be served?
Let Austin have his toil to him reserved
Therefore he was a rider day and night,
Greyhounds he had, as swift as bird in flight
Since riding and the hunting of the hare
Were all his love, for no cost would he spare.
I saw his sleeves were purfled at the hand
With fur of grey, the finest in the land,
Also, to fasten hood beneath his chin,
He had of good wrought gold a curious pin
A love knot in the larger end there was
His head was bald and shone like any glass,
And smooth as one anointed was his face
Fat was this lord, he stood in goodly case
His bulging eyes he rolled about, and hot
They gleamed and red, like fire beneath a pot,
His boots were soft, his horse of great estate
Now certainly he was a fine prelate
He was not pale as some poor wasted ghost
A fat swan loved he best of any roast
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry

Another Nonne with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and Preestes Three.
A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrye,
An out-rydere,[1] that lovede venerye,
A manly man, to been an abbot able
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle [2]
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men,
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is lykned til a fish is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre,
And I seyde, his opinioun was good
What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
As Austin[3] bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour aright,
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond,
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint
He was a lord ful fat and in good point,
His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed,
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat,
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost
A fat swan loved he best of any roost
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye

THE FRIAR

A friar there was a wanton and a merry,
A limiter,[4] a very festive man
In all the Orders Four is none that can
Equal his gossip and his fair language
He had arranged full many a marriage
Of women young, and this at his own cost
Unto his order he was a noble post
Well liked by all and intimate was he
With franklins everywhere in his country,
And with the worthy women of the town

A Frere ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour,[4] a ful solempne man
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun

[1]A monk privileged to ride abroad on the business of his order [2]A small priory
[3]Saint Augustine. [4]A friar licensed to beg within a certain district—within limits

For he had power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licentiat
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun,
He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce,
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al thogh him sore smerte
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres,
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves
And certeinly he hadde a mery note,
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote
Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys
His nekke whyt was as the flour de lys,
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere,
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille
And over al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous,

Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe
In love-dayes[1] ther coude he muchel helpe
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope
Of double worsted was his semi cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse

As doon the sterres in the frosty night
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd

For at confessing he d more power in gown
(As he himself said) than a good curate,
For of his order he was licentiate
He heard confession gently, it was said
Gently absolved too leaving naught of dread

He cannot weep however pains may smart

And certainly he kept a merry note

For unto no such solid man as he
Accorded it as far as he could see,
To have sick lepers for acquaintances
There is no honest advantageousness
In dealing with such poverty stricken curs,
It s with the rich and with big victuallers
And so wherever profit might arise,
Courteous he was and humble in men s eyes.
There was *no other man so virtuous*

With threadbare cope as is the poor scholar,

THE MERCHANT

A Marchant was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat,
His botes clasped faire and fetisly

[1] Days appointed for the settling of disputes by arbitration.

His spoke his notions out right pompously,
Stressing the times when he had won, not lost.
He would the sea were held at any cost
Across from Middleburgh to Orwell town.
At money changing he could make a crown
This worthy man kept all his wits well set,
There was no one could say he was in debt,
So well he governed all his trade affairs
With bargains and with borrowings and with shares
Indeed, he was a worthy man withal,
But, sooth to say, his name I can't recall

His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway th'encrees of his winning
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

THE CLERK

A clerk from Oxford was with us also,
Who'd turned to getting knowledge, long ago
As meagre was his horse as is a rake,
Nor he himself too fat, I'll undertake,
But he looked hollow and went soberly
Right threadbare was his overcoat, for he
Had got him yet no churchly benefice,
Nor was so worldly as to gain office
For he would rather have at his bed's head
Some twenty *books, all bound in black and red,*
Of Aristotle and his philosophy
Than rich robes fiddle, or gay psaltery
Yet, and for all he was philosopher,
He had but little gold within his coffer,
But all that he might borrow from a friend
On books and learning he would swiftly spend,
And then he'd pray right busily *for the souls*
Of those who gave him wherewithal for schools
Of study took he utmost care and heed
Not one word spoke he more than was his need,
And that was said in fullest reverence
And short and quick and full of high good sense
Pregnant of moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
Ne was so wordly for to have offyce
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

THE MAN OF LAW

A sergeant of the law, wary and wise,
Who'd often gone to Paul's walk to advise,
There was also, compact of excellence
Discreet he was, and of great reverence,
At least he seemed so, his words were so wise
Often he sat as justice in assize,
By patent or commission from the crown,
Because of learning and his high renown,
He took large fees and many robes could own
So great a purchaser was never known
All was fee simple to him, in effect,
Wherefore his claims could never be suspect
Nowhere a man so busy of his class,
And yet he seemed much busier than he was
All cases and all judgments could he cite
That from King William's time were apposite.
And he could draw a contract so explicit
Not any man could fault therefrom elicit,
And every statute he'd verbatim quote
He rode but badly in a medley coat,
Belted in a silken sash, with little bars,
But of his dress *no more particulars*

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence·
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale,
Of his array telle I no lenger tale

THE FRANKLIN

A Frankeleyn was in his companye,
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he,
Seint Julian[1] he was in his contree
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon,
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe
Wo was his cook, but if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire,
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour,
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour,[2]

There was a franklin in his company,
White was his beard as is the white daisy
Of sanguine temperament by every sign
He loved right well his morning sop in wine
Delightful living was the goal he'd won,
For he was Epicurus' very son
A man with better cellars there was none
Baked meat was never wanting in his house,
Of fish and flesh and that so plenteous
It seemed to snow therein both food and drink
Of every dainty that a man could think
And nowhere was a worthier vavasor [2]

THE HABERDASHER, THE CARPENTER, THE WEAVER, THE DYER, AND THE ARRAS MAKER

An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapicer,
Were with us eek, clothed in o liveree,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente,
And elles certeyn were they to blame
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y bore

A haberdasher and a carpenter,

THE COOK

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre marchant tart, and galingale

[2]A sub-vassal next in rank below a barc

His spoke his notions out right pompously,
Stressing the times when he had won, not lo
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But of his dress no more particulars

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Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale,
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

THE WIFE OF BATH

A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th'offring bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground,
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe,
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
And thryes hadde she been at Jerusalem,
She hadde passed many a straunge streem,
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye:
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye
Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat

For she coude of that art the olde daunce

There was a housewife come from Bath, or near,
Who—sad to say—was deaf in either ear

THE PARSON

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre Persoun of a toun,

And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,

Who Christ's own gospel truly sought to preach,
Devoutly his parishioners would he teach
Benign he was and wondrous diligent,
Patient in adverse times and well content,
As he was ofttimes proven, always blithe,

To sinners he was not impiteous,
Nor haughty in his speech, nor too divine,
But in all teaching prudent and benign
To lead folk into Heaven but by stress
Of good example was his busyness
But if some sinful one proved obstinate,
Be who it might, of high or low estate,
Him he reproved, and sharply, as I know.
There is nowhere a better priest, I trow.
He had no thirst for pomp or reverence,
Nor made himself a special, spiced conscience,
But Christ's own lore, and His apostles' twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselve

And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie,
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

THE PLOWMAN

With him there was a plowman, was his brother,

In a tabard he rode upon a mare
There were also a reeve[1] and miller there,
A summoner, manciple[2] and pardoner,
And these, beside myself, made all there were

With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel
In a tabard he rood upon a mere
Ther was also a Reve[1] and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple,[2] and my-self, ther were namo.

THE MILLER

The miller was a stout churl, be it known,
Hardy and big of brawn and big of bone,

His beard, as any sow or fox, was red,
And broad it was as if it were a spade
Upon the coping of his nose he had

The Miller was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones,
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.[3]
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade

[1] A steward or bailiff of an estate
[2] An officer who purchases victuals for a college [3] A usual prize in wrestling

A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres,
His nose thirles blake were and wyde
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde,
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys
[illegible]

A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And ther with al he broghte us out of towne

THE MANCIPLE

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille
For whether that he payde, or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his achat,
That he was ay biforn and in good stat
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious,
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire,
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe,
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe

That he so knew the markets when to buy,
He never found himself left high and dry
Now is it not of God a full fair grace
That such a vulgar man has wit to pace
The wisdom of a crowd of learned men?
Of masters had he more than three times ten,
Who were in law expert and curious
Whereof there were a dozen in that house
Fit to be stewards of both rent and land
Of any lord in England who would stand
Upon his own and live in manner good
[illegible]

THE REEVE

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn
[illegible]

Til that his lord was twenty yeer of age,
[illegible]

The reeve he was a slender choleric man,
Who shaved his beard as close as razor can
[illegible]

Bundled he was like friar from chin to croup,
And ever he rode hindmost of our troop

In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister,
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

THE SUMMONER

"The purse is the archdeacon's Hell," said he.
But well I know he *lied in what he said,*

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd,
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day,

Ay "*Questio quid iuris*" wolde he crye
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde,
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs,
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
"Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he

As greet as it were for an ale-stake,
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

THE PARDONER

With him there rode a gentle pardoner
Of Rouncival, his friend and his compeer;

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,

But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther with he his shuldres over spradde,
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon,
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet

A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y shave,
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertorie,
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude,
Therefore he song so merily and loude

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Th estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight
And after wol I telle of our viage,

As shiny eyes he had as has a hare
He had a fine veronica sewed to cap
His wallet lay before him in his lap,
Stuffed full of pardons brought from Rome all hot

Retailing you their words and means of cheer
Nor though I use their very terms nor lie
For this thing do you know as well as I
When one repeats a tale told by a man,

He must report, as nearly as he can,
Every least word if he remember it,
However rude it be, or how unfit,
Or else he may be telling what's untrue,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And, you know well, there's nothing low in it
And Plato says, to those able to read
"The word should be the cousin to the deed"
[illegible]

Great cheer our host gave to us, every one,
And to the supper set us all anon,
And served us then with victuals of the best
Strong was the wine and pleasant to each guest
A seemly man our good host was, withal,
Fit to have been a marshal in some hall,
He was a large man, with protruding eyes,
As fine a burgher as in Cheapside lies,
Bold in his speech, and wise, and right well taught,
And as to manhood, lacking there in naught
Also, he was a very merry man,
And after meat, at playing he began,
Speaking of mirth among some other things,
When all of us had paid our reckonings,
And saying thus 'Now masters, verily
You are all welcome here, and heartily
For by my truth, and telling you no lie,
I have not seen, this year, a company
Here in this inn, fitter for sport than now
Fain would I make you happy, knew I how
[illegible]

You'll tell good tales and shape yourselves to play,
For truly there's no mirth nor comfort, none,
Riding the roads as dumb as is a stone,
And therefore will I furnish you a sport,
As I just said, to give you some comfort,
And if you like it, all, by one assent,
[illegible]

And granted him his way without advice,
And bade him tell his verdict just and wise,
"Masters," quoth he, 'here now is my
advice;
But take it not, I pray you, in disdain;
This is the point, to put it short and plain,
That each of you, beguiling the long day,

He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle,
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe·
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges,
And seyde thus "Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely·
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury, God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye,
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I make yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."
Our counseil was nat longe for to seche,
Us thoughte it was noght worth to amke it wys,
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
"Lordinges," quod he, "now herkneth for the
beste;
But tak it nat, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,

In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle
And which of yow that bereth him best o [illegible],
[illegible] that telleth in this cas

Sire knight," quod he, [illegible] ord,
[illegible] myn acord

[illegible] but by your bashfulness,

He said [illegible]

Why, welcome be the cut and in God's name!
Now let us ride, and hearken what I say"
And at that word we rode forth on our way,
And he began to speak, with right good cheer,
His tale anon, as it is written here.

What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye'
And with that word we riden forth our weye,
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGUE OF THIS BOOK, AND HERE BEGINNETH THE FIRST TALE, WHICH IS THE KNIGHT'S TALE

THE KNIGHT'S TALE

Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
Prelia, laurigero, &c Statius, *Theb* xii 519

Once on a time, as old tales tell to us
There was a duke whose name was Theseus
Of Athens he was lord and governor,
And in his time was such a conqueror
That greater was there not beneath the sun
Full many a rich country had he won,
What with his wisdom and his chivalry

In glory great and with great pageantry,
And too, her younger sister Emily
And thus in victory and with melody
Let I this noble duke to Athens ride
With all his armed host marching at his side
And truly, were it not too long to hear,
I would have told you fully how, that year,

And of the feast was made at their wedding,
And of the tempest at their home-coming,
But all of that I must for now forbear
I have, God knows a large field for my share
And weak the oxen and the soil is tough
The remnant of the tale is long enough

No such a lamentation, on my word,
Nor would they cease lamenting till at last
They'd clutched his bridle reins and held them fast

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus,
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his tyme swich a conquerour,

And weddede the quene Ipolita,
And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree
With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee,
And eek hir yonge suster Emelye
And thus with victorie and with melodye
Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde

By Theseus, and by his chivalrye,
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones,
And how asseged was Ipolita,
The faire hardy quene of Scithia,
And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge,
But al that thing I moot as now forbere
I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough
The remenant of the tale is long ynough
I wol nat letten eek noon of this route,
Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
And lat see now who shal the soper winne,
And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne
This duk, of whom I make mencioun,
When he was come almost unto the toun,
In al his wele and in his moste pryde,
He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,
Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
Ech after other, clad in clothes blake,
But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,
That in this world nis creature livinge,
That herde swich another weymentinge,
And of this cry they nolde never stenten,
Til they the reynes of his brydel henten

What folk ben ye that at myn hoomcominge
Perturben so my feste with cryinge?
Quod Theseus have ye so greet envye
Of myn honour that thus compleyne and crye?
Or who hath yow misboden or offended?

Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour
But we b seken mercy and socour
Have mercy on our wo and our distresse
Som drope of p tee thurgh thy gentilesse
Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle
For certes lord ther nis noon of us alle
That she nath been a duchesse or a quene
Now be we caitifs as t s wel sene
Thanked be Fortune and hir false wheel
That noon estat assureth to be weel
And certes lord t abyden your presence
Here in the temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight
Now help us, lord sith it is in thy might.

I wrecche which that wepe and waille thus
Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus
That starf at Thebes cursed be that day!
And alle we that been n this array
And maken al this lamentacioun
We losten alle our housbondes at that toun
Whyl that the sege ther aboute lay
And yet now th olde Creon weylaway!
The lord s now of Thebes the citee

alle the bodyes on a heep y-draw
And wol nat suffren hem by noon assent
Ne ther to been y buried nor y brent

As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
And right anoon w th-outen more abood
His baner he desplayeth and forth rood

What folk are you that at my home com ng
Dis u b my tr umph w th this dolorous thing?
Cr ed Theseus Do you so much envy
My honour that you thus compla n and cry?
Or who has wronged you now or who offended?

And sa d Lord to whom Fortune has but g ven

Some drop of p ty of your gentleness
Upon us wretched women oh let fall!
Fo see lo d there s no one of us all
That has not been a duches or a queen
Now we are capt ves as may well be seen
Thanks be to Fortune and her t ea he ous wheel
The e s none can rest assu ed of constant weal
And t uly lo d expect ng your return
In P ty s temple wh e the fi es yet bu n

Du ing the s ege that round about it lay
And now the old Creon ah w elaway!
The lord and gove nor of Thebes c ty
Full of h s wrath and all in qu ty
He in desp e and out of tyranny
To do the dead a shame and villa ny

On which in beaten gold was worked, complete,
The Minotaur, which he had slain in Crete
Thus rode this duke, thus rode this conqueror,

In open war, and put his host to flight,
And by assault he took the city then,
Levelling wall and rafter with his men,
And to the ladies he restored again
The bones of their poor husbands who were slain,
To do for them the last rites of that day
But it were far too long a tale to say
The clamour of great grief and sorrowing
Those ladies raised above the bones burning
Upon the pyres, and of the great honour
That Theseus, the noble conqueror,
Paid to the ladies when from him they went,
To make the story short is my intent
When, then, this worthy duke, this Thesëus
Had slain Creon and won Thebes city thus,
Still on the field he took that night his rest,
And dealt with all the land as he thought best
In searching through the heap of enemy dead,
Stripping them of their gear from heel to head,
The busy pillagers could pick and choose,
After the battle, what they best could use,
And so befell that in a heap they found,
Pierced through with many a grievous, bloody wound,
Two young knights lying together, side by side,
Bearing one crest, wrought richly, of their pride,
And of those two Arcita was the one,
The other knight was known as Palamon

Out of the heap the spoilers had them torn

To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;

And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
Un-to the toun of Athenes to dwelle,
And forth he rit, ther nis namore to telle

The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.

And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter,
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obséquies, as was tho the gyse
But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentinge
That the ladyes made at the brenninge
Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;
But shortly for to telle is myn entente
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,
And dide with al the contree as him leste.
To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede,
Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
The pilours diden bisinesse and cure,
After the bataille and disconfiture.
And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
Thurgh-girt with many a grevous blody wounde,

As they that weren of the blood royal
Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.
Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,
And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenes, to dwellen in prisoun
Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun
And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don,
He took his host, and hoom he rood anon
With laurer crowned as a conquerour;

And there he liveth, in joye and in honour,
Terme of his lyf, what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in angwish and in wo,
Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.
This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fressher than the May with floures newe—
For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
I noot which was the fairer of hem two—
Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
She was arisen, and al redy dight,
For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
And seith, "Arys, and do thyn observaunce."
This maked Emelye have remembraunce
To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse,
Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse
And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
She walketh up and doun, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotil gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene joynant to the gardin-wal,
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyinge
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him self compleyning of his wo,
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, "alas!"
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde "a!"
As though he stongen were un to the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterte,
And seyde, "Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be,
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.

There lived he in all joy and all honour
His term of life, what more need words express?
And in a tower, in anguish and distress,
Palamon and Arcita, day and night,
Dwelt whence no gold might help them to take flight
Thus passed by year by year and day by day,
Till it fell out, upon a morn in May,
That Emily, far fairer to be seen
Than is the lily on its stalk of green,
And fresher than is May with flowers new
(For with the rose's colour strove her hue,
I know not which was fairer of the two),
Before the dawn, as was her wont to do,
She rose and dressed her body for delight,
For May will have no sluggards of the night.
That season rouses every gentle heart
And forces it from winter's sleep to start,
Saying "Arise and show thy reverence"
So Emily remembered to go thence
In honour of the May, and so she rose
Clothed, she was sweeter than any flower that blows,
Her yellow hair was braided in one tress
Behind her back, a full yard long, I guess.
And in the garden, as the sun up-rose,
She sauntered back and forth and through each close,
Gathering many a flower, white and red,
To weave a delicate garland for her head,
And like a heavenly angel's was her song
The tower tall, which was so thick and strong,
And of the castle was the great donjon,
(Wherein the two knights languished in prison,
Of whom I told and shall yet tell, withal),
Was joined, at base, unto the garden wall
Whereunder Emily went dallying
Bright was the sun and clear that morn in spring,
And Palamon, the woeful prisoner,
As was his wont, by leave of his gaoler,
Was up and pacing round that chamber high,
From which the noble city filled his eye,
And, too, the garden full of branches green,
Wherein bright Emily, fair and serene,
Went walking and went roving up and down
This sorrowing prisoner, this Palamon,
Being in the chamber, pacing to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his woe,
Cursing his birth, he often cried 'Alas!'
And so it was, by chance or other pass,
That through a window, closed by many a bar
Of iron, strong and square as any spar,
He cast his eyes upon Emilia,
And thereupon he blenched and cried out "Ah!"
As if he had been smitten to the heart
And at that cry Arcita did up-start,
Asking "My cousin, why what ails you now
That you've so deathly pallor on your brow?
Why did you cry out? Who's offended you?
For God's love, show some patience, as I do,
With prison, for it may not different be,
Fortune has given this adversity

Some evil disposition or aspect
Of Saturn did our horoscopes affect
To bring us here, though differently 'twere sworn;
But so the stars stood when we two were born,
We must endure it, that, in brief, is plain"
  This Palamon replied and said again·
"Cousin, indeed in this opinion now
Your fancy is but vanity, I trow.
It's not our prison that caused me to cry
But I was wounded lately through the eye
Down to my heart, and that my bane will be
The beauty of the lady that I see

And said ' O Venus, if it be thy will
To be transfigured in this garden, thus
Before me, sorrowing wretch, oh now help us
Out of this prison to be soon escaped
And if it be my destiny is shaped,
By fate, to die in durance, in bondage,
Have pity, then, upon our lineage
That has been brought so low by tyranny"
  And on that word Arcita looked to see
This lady who went roving to and fro
And in that look her beauty struck him so
That, if poor Palamon is wounded sore,
Arcita is as deeply hurt, and more.

  "Nay," quoth Arcita, "earnest, now, I say!
God help me, I am in no mood for play!"
  Palamon knit his brows and stood at bay.
"It will not prove," he said, "to your honour
After so long a time to turn traitor
To me, who am your cousin and your brother,
Sworn as we are, and each unto the other,
That never, though for death in any pain,
Never, indeed, till death shall part us twain,
Either of us in love shall hinder other,
No, nor in any thing, O my dear brother;
But that, instead, you shall so further me
As I shall you All this we did agree.
Such was your oath and such was mine also.
You dare not now deny it, well I know
Thus you are of my party, beyond doubt.
And now you would all falsely go about

Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, al though we hadde it sworn,
So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it, this is the short and pleyn."
  This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
"Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prison caused me nat for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse."
And ther-with-al on kneës doun he fil,
And seyde: "Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure
Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
And if so be my destinee be shapen
By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
Of our linage have som compassioun,
That is so lowe y-broght by tirannye."
And with that word Arcite gan espye
Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
"The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
I nam but deed, ther nis namore to seye."
  This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
Dispitously he loked, and answerde
"Whether seistow this in ernest or in pley?"
  "Nay," quod Arcite, "in ernest, by my fey!
God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye."
  This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye:
"It nere," quod he, "to thee no greet honour
For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
Neither of us in love to hindren other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.
This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.
Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.
I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
To forthre me, as I have told biforn.

For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,
Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn "
  This Arcitē ful proudly spak ageyn,
"Thou shalt," quod he, "be rather fals than I;
But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly,
For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow.
What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
Whether she be a womman or goddesse!
Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,
And myn is love, as to a creature;
For which I tolde thee myn aventure
As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.
I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn,
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve to any erthly man
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
To stonden in hir grace, namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verraily,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;
Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,
And bar awey the boon bitwixe hem bothe
And therfore, at the kinges court, my brother,
Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
Love if thee list, for I love and ay shal,
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prisoun mote we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure "
  Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
If that I hadde leyser for to seye,
But to th'effect. It happed on a day,

So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle,
But of that story list me nat to wryte
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,

Whether she is a woman or goddess!
Yours is a worship as of holiness,
While mine is love, as of a mortal maid;
Wherefore I told you of it, unafraid,

Love is a greater law, aye by my pan,
Than man has ever given to earthly man
And therefore statute law and such decrees
Are broken daily and in all degrees

And certainly, dear brother, that is all
Here in this prison cell must we remain
And each endure whatever fate ordain "
  Great was the strife, and long, betwixt the two,
If I had but the time to tell it you,
Save in effect It happened on a day

Pirithous loved Arcita, too, that knight,
Having known him in Thebes full many a year;

As made between those two of great renown:

That if Arcita, any time, were found,
on ground

ad.

edge
He forfeit life His neck was under pledge

Said he "Alas, the day that I was born!
I'm in worse prison, now, and more forlorn;
doomed eternally to dwell

were y-founde

speuue,
Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!
How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte,
He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously,
To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
He seyde, "Allas that day that I was born!
worse than biforn,

Ther now I am exyled from my wele
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
I nam but deed, ther nis no remedye"
Up-on that other syde Palamon,
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouneth of his youling and clamour
The pure fettres on his shines grete
Weren of his bittre salte teres wete
'Allas!' quod he, Arcita, cosin myn,
Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge
Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede,
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
That by som aventure, or som tretee,
Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf
For, as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage
For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,
With al the wo that prison may me yive,
And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo'
Ther with the fyr of jelousye up sterte
With inne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
The box tree, or the asshen dede and colde
Tho seyde he, "O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,

And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes gilteless, pardee!
What governaunce is in this prescience,
That gilteless tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille

Who now am only exiled from my weal
For since I may not see you Emily
I am but dead there is no remedy
And on the other hand this Palamon
When that he found Arcita truly gone
Such lamentation made he that the tower
Resounded of his crying hour by hour
The very fetters on his legs were yet
Again with all his bitter salt tears wet
Alas! said he Arcita cousin mine
With all our strife God knows you've won the wine

And wage a war so sharp on this city
That by some fortune or by some treaty
You shall yet have that lady to your wife
For whom I now must needs lay down my life
For surely 'tis in possibility
Since you are now at large from prison free

That has brought many a true man unto grief
Going at large and where he wills may turn

Of fear of Arcita, and jealousy"
Now will I leave this Palamon, for he
Is in his prison, where he still must dwell,
And of Arcita will I forthwith tell
Summer being passed away and nights grown long,
Increased now doubly all the anguish strong
Both of the lover and the prisoner
I know not which one was the woefuller.
For, to be brief about it, Palamon
Is doomed to lie for ever in prison,
In chains and fetters till he shall be dead,
And exiled (on the forfeit of his head)
Arcita must remain abroad, nor see,
For evermore, the face of his lady
You lovers, now I ask you this question
Who has the worse, Arcita or Palamon?
The one may see his lady day by day
But yet in prison must he dwell for aye
The other, where he wishes, he may go,
But never see his lady more, ah no
Now answer as you wish, all you that can,
For I will speak right on as I began

For jelousye, and fere of hym Arcite"
Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
And lete hym in his prison stille dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle
The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
Bothe of the lovere and the prisoner.
I noot which hath the wofullere mester.
For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun
Perpetuelly is dampned to prisoun,
In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed,
And Arcite is exyled upon his heed
For ever-mo as out of that contree,
Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.
Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?
That oon may seen his lady day by day,
But in prison he moot dwelle alway.
That other wher him list may ryde or go,
But seen his lady shal he never-mo
Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE SECOND PART

Now when Arcita unto Thebes was come,
He lay and languished all day in his home,
Since he his lady nevermore should see,
But telling of his sorrow brief I'll be
Had never any man so much torture,
No, nor shall have while this world may endure
Bereft he was of sleep and meat and drink
That lean he grew and dry as shaft, I think
His eyes were hollow and ghastly to behold,
His face was sallow, all pale and ashen cold,
And solitary kept he and alone,
Wailing the whole night long making his moan
And if he heard a song or instrument,
Then he would weep ungoverned and lament,
So feeble were his spirits, and so low,
And so changed was he, that no man could know
Him by his words or voice, whoever heard
And in this change, for all the world he fared
As if not troubled by malady of love,
But by that humor dark and grim whereof
Springs melancholy madness in the brain,
And fantasy unbridled holds its reign
And shortly, all was turned quite upside-down,
Both habits and the temper all had known
Of him, this woeful lover, Dan Arcite
Why should I all day of his woe indite?
When he'd endured all this a year or two,
This cruel torment and this pain and woe,
At Thebes, in his own country, as I said,
Upon a night, while sleeping in his bed,
He dreamed of how the winged God Mercury
Before him stood and bade him happier be
His sleep-bestowing wand he bore upright,
A hat he wore upon his ringlets bright
Arrayed this god was (noted at a leap)
As he'd been when to Argus he gave sleep

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde "allas,"
For seen his lady shal he never-mo
And shortly to concluden al his wo,
So muche sorwe had never creature
That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde,
His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
And wailling al the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent,
So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe
His speche nor his vois, though men it herde
And in his gere, for al the world he ferde
Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
Engendred of humour malencolyk,
Biforen, in his celle fantastyk.
And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
Of him, this woful lovere daun Arcite.
What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,
Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie
Biforn him stood and bad him to be murye
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep,

And seyde him thus· "T'Athénës shaltou wende,
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende"

To see my lady, that I love and serve,
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve"
And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,

He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe,
Live in Athénes ever-more unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array,
And cladde him as a povre laborer,
And al allone, save oonly a squyer,
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,
T'Athénës is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente up-on a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse,
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn,
The which that dwelling was with Emelye;
For he was wys, and coude soon aspye
Of every servaunt, which that serveth here
Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,

Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
And "Philostrate" he seide that he highte.
But half so wel biloved a man as he
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;
He was so gentil of condicioun,
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden, that it were a charitee
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,
And putten him in worshipful servyse,
Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse
And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge
Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so neer

And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte.
In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun
This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,

And thus he spoke· "To Athens shall you wend,
For all your woe is destined there to end"

Nor for the dread of death will I now spare

Seeing his lady well nigh every day.
And right anon he altered his array,
Like a poor labourer in mean attire,
And all alone, save only for a squire,
Who knew his secret heart and all his case,
And who was dressed as poorly as he was,
To Athens was he gone the nearest way
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffered services
To drudge and drag, as any one devises.
And to be brief herein, and to be plain,

For he was young and mighty, let me own,
And big of muscle, aye and big of bone,
To do what any man asked, in a trice

And of the chamber he had made him squire,

... seven years has now sat Palamon.

Wasted by woe and by his long distress
Who has a two-fold evil heaviness
But Palamon? whom love yet tortures so
That half out of his wits he is for woe,
And joined thereto he is a prisoner,
Perpetually, not only for a year
And who could rhyme in English properly,
His martyrdom? Forsooth it is not I
And therefore I pass lightly on my way
  It fell out in the seventh year in May
On the third night (as say the books of old
Which have this story much more fully told),
Were it by chance or were it destiny
(Since when a thing is destined it must be),
That shortly after midnight Palamon
By helping of a friend broke from prison
And fled the city fast as he might go
For he had given his guard a drink that so
Was mixed of spice and honey and certain wine
And Theban opiate and anodyne
That all that night, although a man might
  shake
This gaoler he slept on nor could awake
And thus he flees as fast as ever he may
The night was short and it was nearly day
Wherefore he needs must find a place to hide,
And to a grove that grew hard by with stride
Of furtive foot, went fearful Palamon
In brief he'd formed his plan as he went on
That in the grove he would lie fast all day
And when night came then would he take his way
Toward Thebes and there find friends and of
  them pray
Their help on Theseus in war's array,
And briefly either he would lose his life,
Or else win Emily to be his wife
This is the gist of his intention plain
  Now I'll return to Arcita again
Who little knew how near to him was care
Till Fortune caught him in her tangling snare
  The busy lark the herald of the day
Salutes now in her song the morning grey,
And fiery Phoebus rises up so bright
That all the east is laughing with the light
And with his streamers dries, among the greves,[1]
The silver droplets hanging on the leaves.
And so Arcita in the court royal
With Theseus, and his squire principal
Is risen, and looks on the merry day
And now, to do his reverence to May
Calling to mind the point of his desire
He on a courser, leaping high like fire
Is ridden to the fields to muse and play,
Out of the court, a mile or two away
And to the grove whereof I lately told
By accident his way began to hold
To make him there the garland that one weaves
Of woodbine leaves and of green hawthorn leaves.
And loud he sang within the sunlit sheen
"O May, with all thy flowers and all thy green
Welcome be thou, thou fair and freshening May

Forpyned, what for wo and for distresse,
Who feleth double soor and hevinesse
But Palamon? that love destreyneth so,
That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo,
And eek therto he is a prisoner
Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yeer
Who coude ryme in English proprely
His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I,
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may
  It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,
That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)
Were it by aventure or destinee,
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,
And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go,
For he had yive his gayler drinke so
Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,
That al that night, thogh that men wolde him
  shake,
The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake,
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may
The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes-cost he moste him selven hyde,
And til a grove, faste ther besyde,
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun
For shortly, this was his opinioun,
That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
And in the night than wolde he take his way
To Thebes ward, his freendes for to
  preye
On Theseus to helpe him to werreye,
And shortly, outher he wolde lese his lyf,
Or winne Emelye un to his wyf,
This is th'effect and his entente pleyn
  Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,
[illegible] how ny that was his care,
[illegible] snare
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And with his [illegible][1]
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squyer principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day
And, for to doon his observaunce to May,
Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,
Is riden in to the feeldes, him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye,
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leves,
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene
"May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,

[1]Groves.

I hope that I som grene gete may '
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In to the grove ful hastily he sterte,

No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte
But sooth is seyd gon sithen many yeres,
That feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres "
It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,

Right so can gery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk right as hir day
Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y lyke
 Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke,
And sette him doun with-outen any more
 Alas! ' quod he, that day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?
Allas! y broght is to confusioun
The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
That Thebes bulte or first the toun bigan,
And of the citee first was crouned king
Of his linage am I, and his of spring
By verray ligne as of the stok royal
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he, that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squyer povrely
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name,
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte
Allas! thou felle Mars allas! Juno
Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,
Save only me and wrecched Palamoun,
That Theseus martyreth in prisoun

I hope to pluck some garland green today
And from his courser with a lusty heart
Into the grove right hastily did start
And on a path he wandered up and down
Near which and as it chanced this Palamon

But it has been a truth these many years
That Fields have eyes and every wood has ears
It s well for one to bear himself with po se

Arc ta having roamed and roved his fill
And having sung his rondel lustily
Into a study fell he, suddenly

The sun shines now and now the rain comes fast,
Even so can fickle Venus overcast
The spir ts of her people as her day
Is changeful so she changes her array
Seldom is Friday quite like all the week.
 Arcita having sung began to speak
And sat him down sigh ng like one forlorn
 Alas said he the day that I was born!
Ho v long O Juno of thy cruelty
Wilt thou wage b tter war on Thebes c ty?
Alas! Confounded beyond all reason
The blood of Cadmus and of Amph on

And now I m such a wretched serving thrall
That he who is my mortal enemy
I serve him as his squire, and all humbly

So I could do one thing to your pleasance!
And with that word he fell do vn in a trance
That lasted long and then he d d up start.

This Palamon, who thought that through his heart
He felt a cold and sudden sword blade glide,
For rage he shook, no longer would he hide
But after he had heard Arcita's tale,
As he were mad, with face gone deathly pale,
He started up and sprang out of the thicket,
Crying "Arcita, oh you traitor wicked,
Now are you caught, that crave my lady so,
For whom I suffer all this pain and woe,
And are my blood, and know my secrets' store,

And answered thus "By God that sits above!
Were it not you are sick and mad for love,
And that you have no weapon in this place,
Out of this grove you'd never move a pace,
But meet your death right now, and at my hand.
For I renounce the bond and its demand

Enough for you, and clothes for your bedding
And if it be that you my lady win
And slay me in this wood that now I'm in,

O Cupido, that know'st not charity!
O despot, that no peer will have with thee!
Truly, 'tis said, that love, like all lordship,
Declines, with little thanks, a partnership
Well learned they that, Arcite and Palamon.
Arcita rode into the town anon,
And on the morrow, ere the dawn, he bore,
Secretly, arms and armour out of store,

This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
He sterte him up out of the buskes thikke,
And seyde "Arcite, false traitour wikke,
Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
And hast by-iaped here duk Theseus,
And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
But I wol love hir only, and namo,
For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepne have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede noght that outher thou shalt dye,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte"
This Arcitē, with ful despitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,
As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,
And seyde thus. "by God that sit above,
Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love,
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurtee and the bond
Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee.
What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,
And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight,
And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle,
With-outen witing of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee,
And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me
And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe
Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne,
Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me"
This Palamon answerde· "I graunte it thee."
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe
O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyd, that love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe,
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;

And breketh bothe bowes and the
  leves,
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I,

Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing,
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
As freendly as he were his owne brother;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen ech at other wonder longe.
Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
In his fighting were a wood leoun,

The destinee, ministre general,

And namely at the grete hert in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde

And in the grove at time and place they'd set
Arcita and this Palamon were met

aghast
Here comes apace my mortal enemy!
Now without fail, he must be slain or I,
For either I must kill him ere he pass
Or he will make of me a dead carcass —

Each of them helping so they armed each other
As dutifully as he were his own brother

Great destiny minister general,

With his Hippolyta the lovely queen
And fair Emilia clothed all in green

And over a brook and so forth on his way
This duke would have a course at him today
With such hounds as it pleased him to command

And when this duke was come upon that land,
Under the slanting sun he looked, anon,
And there saw Arcita and Palamon,
Who furiously fought, as two boars do;
The bright swords went in circles to and fro

And in one bound he was between the two,
And lugged his great sword out, and cried out "Ho!

But tell me now what manner of men ye be

We have deserved our death at hands of you
Two woeful wretches are we, two captives
That are encumbered by our own sad lives,

That from the land was banished, on his head.
And for the which he merits to be dead
For this is he who came unto your gate,
Calling himself Philostrates—nay, wait!—
Thus has he fooled you well this many a year,
And you have made him your chief squire, I hear
And this is he that loves fair Emily
For since the day is come when I must die,
I make confession plainly and say on,
That I am that same woeful Palamon
Who has your prison broken, viciously
I am your mortal foe, and it is I

This worthy duke presently spoke again,
Saying "This judgment needs but a short session
Your own mouth, aye, and by your own confession,
Has doomed and damned you, as I shall record
There is no need for torture, on my word
But you shall die, by mighty Mars the red!"
But then the queen, whose heart for pity bled,
Began to weep, and so did Emily
And all the ladies in the company
Great pity must it be, so thought they all,
That ever such misfortune should befall
For these were gentlemen, of great estate,

And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bores two,
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leeste strook
It semed as it wolde felle an ook,
But what they were, no-thing he ne woot
This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cryed, "ho!
Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,
That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!
But telleth me what mister men ye been,
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-outen juge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally?"
This Palamon answerde hastily
And seyde "sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves,
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge,
But slee me first, for seynte charitee,
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me
Or slee him first, for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer
And this is he that loveth Emelye
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleynly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte
Therfore I axe deeth and my juwyse,
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn."
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, "This is a short conclusioun
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!"
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir blody woundes wyde and sore;
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
"Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!"

And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet ther as he
stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood,
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,

As thus he thoghte wel, that every man
Wol helpe him self in love, if that he can,
And eek delivere him self out of prisoun,
And eek his herte had compassioun
Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon,
And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
And softe un to himself he seyde ' fy
Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
As wel as to a proud despitous man
That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!
That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
That in swich cas can no divisioun,
But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon."
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
And spak thise same wordes al on highte —
' The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,
He may be cleped a god for his miracles,
For he can maken at his owne gyse
Of everich herte, as that him list devyse
Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,

Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y payed
Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse

A man mot been a fool, or yong or old,
I woot it by my self ful yore agoon
For in my tyme a servant was I oon
And therfore, sin I knowe of loves peyne,
And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,
I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespas,

And down upon their bare knees did they fall,
And would have kissed his feet there where he
stood
Till at the last assuaged was his high mood
For soon will pity flow through gentle heart

And will himself deliver from prison
And too at heart he had compassion on

Lo here Arcita and this Palamon

But this is yet the best jest of them all
That she for whom they have this jollity
Can thank them for it quite as much as me
She knows no more of all this fervent fare,
By God! than knows a cuckoo or a hare
But all must be essayed both hot and cold

And know how sorely it can man constrain
As one that has been taken in the net
I will forgive your trespass, and forget,

At instance of my sweet queen, kneeling here,
Aye, and of Emily, my sister dear
And you shall presently consent to swear
That nevermore will you my power dare,
Nor wage war on me, either night or day,
But will be friends to me in all you may,
I do forgive this trespass, full and fair "
  And then they swore what he demanded there,
And, of his might, they of his mercy prayed,
And he extended grace, and thus he said
"To speak for royalty's inheritress,
Although she be a queen or a princess
Each of you both is worthy I confess
When comes the time to wed but nonetheless,
I speak now of my sister Emily
The cause of all this strife and jealousy—
You know yourselves she may not marry two,
At once, although you fight or what you do
One of you, then, and be he loath or lief,
Must pipe his sorrows in an ivy leaf
That is to say, she cannot have you both,
However jealous one may be or wroth
Therefore I put you both in this decree,
That each of you shall learn his destiny
As it is cast, and hear now, in what wise
The word of fate shall speak through my device
  My will is this, to draw conclusion flat,
[illegible]

Your claim to love I promise you again,
Upon my word, and as I am a knight
[illegible]

To whom Fortuna gives so fair a grace
The lists shall be erected in this place
And God so truly on my soul have ruth
As I shall prove an honest judge in truth
You shall no other judgment in me waken
Than that the one shall die or else be taken
And if you think the sentence is well said
Speak your opinion, that you're well repaid
This is the end and I conclude hereon
  Who looks up lightly now but Palamon?
Who leaps for you but Arcita the knight?
And who could tell or who could ever write
The jubilation made within that place
Where Theseus has shown so fair a grace?
But down on knee went each one for delight
And thanked him there with all his heart and
  might,
And specially those Thebans did their part
And thus, with high hopes, being blithe of
  heart,

At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,
And eek of Emelye, my suster dere
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
That never mo ye shul my contree dere,
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may,
I yow foryeve this trespas every del "
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde
  "To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and jelousye,
Ye woot your-self, she may nat wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef,
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so jelous, ne so wrothe
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape, and herkneth in what wyse,
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse
  My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,
With-outen any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste
Frely, with outen raunson or daunger,
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille
And thus bihote I yow, with-outen faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whether of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even juge been and trewe
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd
This is your ende and your conclusioun "
  Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?
But doun on knees wente every maner wight,
And thanked him with al her herte and
  might,
And namely the Thebans ofte sythe
And thus with good hope and with herte
  blythe

They take hir leve, and hom ward gonne they ryde
To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde

They took their leave, and homeward did they ride
To Thebes that sits within her old walls wide

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE THIRD PART

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
If I foryete to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
To maken up the listes royally,
That swich a noble theatre as it was,
I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas
The circuit a myle was aboute,
Walled of stoon, and diched al with-oute
Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
That, whan a man was set on o degree,
He letted nat his felawe for to see
Est ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
West ward, right swich another in the opposit
And shortly to concluden, swich a place
Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space,
For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
That geometrie or ars metrik can,
Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devyse
And for to doon his ryte and sacrifyse,
He est ward hath, up-on the gate above,
In worship of Venus, goddesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie,
And west ward, in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars, he maked hath right swich another,
That coste largely of gold a fother
And north ward, in a touret on the wal,
Of alabastre whyt and reed coral
An oratorie riche for to see,
In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse

First in the temple of Venus maystow see
Wroght on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,

Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I can make of mencioun
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,

The circuit rising hemmed a mile about
Walled all of stone and moated deep without
Round was the shape as compass ever traces
And built in tiers the height of sixty paces

Nor Turnus with his hardy, fierce courage,

Lo, all these folk were so caught in her snare
They cried aloud in sorrow and in care
Here let suffice examples one or two,
Though I might give a thousand more to you
  The form of Venus, glorious as could be,
Was naked, floating on the open sea,
And from the navel down all covered was
With green waves, bright as ever any glass
A citole in her small right hand had she,

Whose two white wings upon his shoulders grow;
And blind he was, as it is often seen,
A bow he bore, and arrows bright and keen
  Why should I not as well, now, tell you all
The portraiture that was upon the wall
Within the fane of mighty Mars the red?
In length and breadth the whole wall was painted
Like the interior of that grisly place,
The mighty temple of great Mars in Thrace,
In that same cold and frosty region where
Mars to his supreme mansion may repair
  First, on the wall was limned a vast forest
Wherein there dwelt no man nor any beast,
With knotted, gnarled, and leafless trees, so old
The sharpened stumps were dreadful to behold,
Through which there ran a rumbling even now,
As if a storm were breaking every bough,
And down a hill beneath a sharp descent,
The temple stood of Mars armipotent,
Wrought all of burnished steel, whereof the gate
Was grim like death to see, and long and strait
And therefrom raged a wind that seemed to shake
The very ground, and made the great doors quake.
The northern light in at those same doors shone,
For window in that massive wall was none
Through which a man might any light discern
The doors were all of adamant eterne,
Rivetted on both sides, and all along,
With toughest iron, and to make it strong.
Each pillar that sustained this temple grim
Was thick as tun, of iron bright and trim
  There saw I first the dark imagining
Of felony, and all the compassing,
And cruel anger, red as burning coal,
Pickpurses, and the dread that eats the soul;

Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wal in portreying,
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—
Th'enchauntements of Medea and Circes—
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus, caytif in servage.
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye,
For as hir list the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde "allas!"
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.
  The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navele doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and brighte as any glas
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smellinge;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two,
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene,
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.
  Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.
  First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,
With knotty knarry bareyn trees olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough·
And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree
Was long and streit, and gastly for to see
And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese,
That it made al the gates for to rese.
The northren light in at the dores shoon,
For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dores were alle of adamant eterne,
Y-clenched overthwart and endelong
With iren tough, and, for to make it strong,
Every piler, the temple to sustene,
Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.
  Ther saugh I first the derke imagining
Of felonye, and al the compassing,
The cruel ire, reed as any glede;
The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;

Contek, with blody knyf and sharp manace,
Al ful of chirking was that sory place
The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,
His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer,
The nayl y-driven in the shode a night,
The colde deeth, with mouth gaping
upright
Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,
With disconfort and sory contenaunce
Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage,
Armed compleint, out hees, and fiers outrage
The careyne in the bush, with throte y-corve
A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm y storve,
The tiraunt, with the prey by force y raft,
The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft
Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres,
The hunte strangled with the wilde beres
The sowe freten the child right in the cradel,
The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel
Noght was foryeten by th'infortune of Marte,
The carter over riden with his carte,
Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun
Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith
And al above, depeynted in a tour,
Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour,
With the sharpe swerde over his heed
Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed
Depeynted was the slaughtre of Julius,
Of grete Nero, and of Antonius,
Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther biforn,
By manasinge of Mars, right by figure,
So was it shewed in that portreiture
As is depeynted in the sterres above,
Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love
Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde
The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood,

As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre,

The smiling villain, hiding knife in cloak,
The farm barns burning and the thick black smoke,
The treachery of murder done in bed

upright

A thousand slain nor one by plague nor starved
The tyrant with the spoils of violent theft

The surgeon and the butcher and the smith
Who forges sharp swords and great ills therewith
And over all depicted in a tower

Of Nero great, and of Antonius

One being Puella and one Rubeus
This god of armies was companioned thus
A wolf there was before him at his feet,

And after, made into the lone Pole Star.

There was it, I can't tell how such things are.
Her son, too, is a star, as men may see
There saw I Daphne turned into a tree
(I do not mean Diana, no, but she,
Penëus daughter, who was called Daphne).
I saw Actaeon made a hart all rude
For punishment of seeing Diana nude,

This goddess on an antlered hart was set,
With little hounds about her feet, and yet

Her eyes were downcast, looking at the ground,
Where Pluto in his dark realm may be found
Before her was a woman travailing,
Who was so long in giving birth, poor thing,
That pitifully Lucina did she call,
Praying, "Oh help, for thou may'st best of all!"
Well could he paint, who had this picture
  wrought,
With many a florin he'd his colours bought,
  But now the lists were done, and Theseus,
Who at so great cost had appointed thus
The temples and the circus, as I tell,
When all was done, he liked it wondrous well
But hold I will from Thesëus, and on
To speak of Arcita and Palamon

And eager was to win surpassing fame,
Had prayed to play a part in that great game;
And all was well with him who chosen was
For if there came tomorrow such a case,
You know right well that every lusty knight
Who loves the ladies fair and keeps his might,

And in a breastplate, under light jupon;

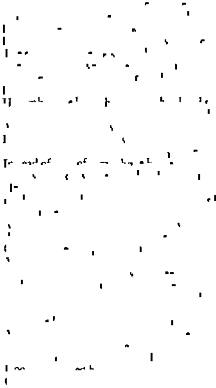
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre,
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see
Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked,
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught.
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawen to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, "*help, for thou mayst best of alle*"
Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it
  wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte
  Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
  The day approcheth of hir retourninge,
That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,
The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde,
And til Athénës, hir covenant for to holde,
Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes

As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye
For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game,
And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.
For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
Were it in Engelond, or elles-where,
They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there.
To fighte for a lady, *ben'cite!*

And somme woln have a peyre plates
large,
And somme woln have a Pruce sheld, or a targe,
Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel
Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old
Armed were they, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinioun
Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun
Ligurge him self, the grete king of Trace,
Blak was his berd, and manly was his face
The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed
And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,
With kempe heres on his browes stoute,
His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge,
His shuldres brode his armes rounde and longe
And as the gyse was in his contree,
Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,
With foure whyte boles in the trays
In stede of cote-armure over his harnays,
With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, col blak, for old
His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shoon for blak
A wrethe of gold arm greet, of huge wighte,
Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts
Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts,
Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer,
And folwed him, with mosel faste y bounde,
Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute
With Arcita, in stories as men finde,
The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,

grete
His sadel was of brend gold newe y bete,
A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
Bret ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge
His crispe heer lyk ringes was y ronne,
And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,
A fewe fraknes in his face y spreynd,
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y meynd,
And as a leoun he his loking caste
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe,
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge
Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,

And some wore breast and back plates thick and
large
And some would have a Prussian shield or targe,
Some on their very legs were armoured well



great

Yellow as gold and gleaming as the sun.

About this king there ran on every s de
Many tame lions and leopards in their pride

He feasted them and was at so much pains
To give them ease and honour of his gains
That men yet hold that never human wit
Of high or low estate could better it
The minstrelsy the service at the feast

Or what hawks sat upon the perch above
Or what great hounds were lying on the floor—
Of all these I will make no mention more
But tell my tale for that I think is best
Now comes the point and listen if you ve zest

He rose to go upon a pilgrimage
Unto the blessed Cytherea s shrine
(I mean queen Venus worthy and benign)
And at her hour he then walked forth apace
Out to the lists wherein her temple was
And down he knelt in manner to revere
And from a full heart spoke as you shall hear
Fairest of fair O lady mine Venus
Daughter of Jove and spouse to Vulcanus
Thou gladdener of the Mount of Citheron

My heavy heart its evils can t bewray
I m so confused I can find naught to say
But mercy lady bright that knowest well
My heart and seest all the ills I feel
Consider and have ruth upon my sore
As truly as I shall for evermore
Well as I may thy one true servant be
And wage a war henceforth on chastity
If thou wilt help thus do I make my vow
To boast of knightly sk ll I care not now
Nor do I ask tomorrow s victory
Nor any such renown nor vain glory
Of prize of arms blown before lord and churl
But I would have possession of one girl

Ful richely in alle maner thinges
For trusteth wel that dukes, erles, kinges,
Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye
Aboute this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight
Thus Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had broght hem in to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it
The minstralcye, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,

What houndes liggen on the floor adoun
Of al this make I now no mencioun,
But al the effect, that thinketh me the beste,
Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste
The Sonday night, er day began to springe,
When Palamon the larke herde singe,
Although it nere nat day by houres two,
Yet song the larke, and Palamon also

And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
Un to the listes, ther hir temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here
Faireste of faire, o lady myn Venus,
Doughter to Jove and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,
Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,
And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte
Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
Th effectes ne the torments of myn helle,
Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye,
I am so confus that I can noght seye
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
My thought and seest what harmes that I feel,
Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
As wisly as I shal for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alwey with chastitee,
That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe
I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,
Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
But I wolde have fully possessioun

Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse,
Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse
I reche nat, but it may bettre be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in myne armes
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,
That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,
And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete
And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere

This is in effect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere"
When th'orisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,

The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,

But it be any thing in general,
And yet it were a game to heren al,
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge
But it is good a man ben at his large
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al,
A coroune of a grene ook cerial

Un to Diane she spak, as ye may here
'O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe heven and erthe and see is sene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly
Chaste goddesse, wel wostow that I

Of Emily, and die in thy service
Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.
For I care not, unless it better be
Whether I vanquish them or they do me,
So I may have my lady in my arms

And if thou wilt not so O lady, cede
I pray thee that tomorrow, with a spear,

His sacrifice he made this Palamon,
Right piously, with all the circumstance,
Albeit I tell not now his observance
But at the last the form of Venus shook

Of things for sacrifice ceremonial
There was not one thing lacking I'll but add

But how she did the rite I dare not tell,

Desire to be a virgin all my life,
Nor ever wish to be man's love or wife
I am thou know st yet of thy company,
A maid who loves the hunt and venery
And to go rambling in the greenwood wild,
And not to be a wife and be with child
I do not crave the company of man
Now help me, lady since thou may st and can,
By the three beings who are one in thee
For Palamon, who bears such love to me
And for Arcita loving me so sore
This grace I pray thee without one thing more,
To send down love and peace between those two,
And turn their hearts away from me so do
That all their furious love and their desire
And all their ceaseless torment and their fire
Be quenched or turned into another place
And if it be thou wilt not show this grace
Or if my destiny be moulded so
That I must needs have one of these same two,
Then send me him that most desires me
Behold O goddess of utter chastity
The bitter tears that down my two cheeks fall
Since thou art maid and keeper of us all
My maidenhead keep thou and still preserve,
And while I live a maid thee will I serve
  The fires blazed high upon the altar there
While Emily was saying thus her prayer
But suddenly she saw a sight most quaint
For there before her eyes one fire went faint,
Then blazed again and after that anon
The other fire was quenched and so was gone
And as it died it made a whistling sound
As do wet branches burning on the ground
And from the brands ends there ran out anon,
What looked like drops of blood and many a one,
At which so much aghast was Emily
That she was near dazed and began to cry
For she knew naught of what it signified
But only out of terror thus she cried
And wept till it was pitiful to hear
But thereupon Diana did appear
With bow in hand like any right huntress,
And said My daughter leave this heaviness
Among the high gods it has been affirmed
And by eternal written word confirmed
That you shall be the wife of one of those
Who bear for you so many cares and woes,
But unto which of them I may not tell
I can no longer tarry so farewell
The fires that on my altar burn incense
Should tell you everything ere you go hence,
Of what must come of love in this your case
  And with that word the arrows of the chase
The goddess carried clattered and did ring
And forth she went in mystic vanishing
At which this Emily astonished was
And said she then Ah what means this, alas!
I put myself in thy protection here,
Diana and at thy disposal dear"
  And home she wended, then the nearest way
This is the purport, there's no more to say

Desire to been a mayden al my lyf,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe
Noght wol I knowe companye of man
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two,
And fro me turne awey hir hertes so,
That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr
Be queynt, or turned *in* another place;
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my destinee be shapen so,
That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
As sende me him that most desireth me
Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
The bittre teres that on my chekes falle
Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle,
My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve"
  The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere,
But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
And quiked agayn, and after that anon
That other fyr was queynt, and al agon,
And as it queynte, it made a whistelinge,
As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge,
And at the brondes ende out ran anoon
As it were blody dropes many oon,
For which so sore agast was Emelye,
That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
For she ne wiste what it signifyed,
But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,
And weep, that it was pitee for to here
And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
And seyde 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse
Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
And by eterne word write and confermed,
Thou shalt ben wedded un to oon of tho
That han for thee so muchel care and wo,
But un to which of hem I may nat telle
Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle
The fyres which that on myn auter brenne
Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas"
And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,
And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge,
For which this Emelye astoned was,
And seyde, "What amounteth this, allas!
I putte me in thy proteccioun,
Diane, and in thy disposicioun"
  And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye
This is th'effect, ther is namore to seye

The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,
Arcite un to the temple walked is
Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifyse,

And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,

Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne
For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,
Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee
Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,

Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonning as thou wost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
That ever was any lyves creature,
For she that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,

And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
And alle the armes of my companye,

Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore
The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
Of which Arcita som what him agaste
The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte,
And swete smel the ground anon up yaf,
And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,

With all the ceremonies pagan wise
With sobered heart and high devotion on
This wise right thus he said his orison

And givest fortune as thou dost devise
Accept of me my pious sacrifice
If so it be that my youth may deserve
And that my strength be worthy found to serve
Thy godhead and be numbered one of thine
Then pray I thee for ruth on pain that's mine

For that same sorrow that was in thy heart
Have pity now upon my pains that smart
I'm young and little skilled as knowest thou
With love more hurt and much more broken now

And ere she'll meet with mercy where I can

My beard my hair that ripples down so long
That never yet has felt the slightest wrong
Of razor or of shears to thee I'll give,
And be thy loyal servant while I live
Now lord have pity on my sorrows sore
Give me the victory I ask no more

And a sweet odour rose up from the ground
And Arcita whirled then his arm around

And yet more incense on the fire he cast,
the list

Until the sallow Saturn,
Who had so many happenings known of old,
Found from his full experience the art
To satisfy each party and each part
For true it is, age has great advantage;
Experience and wisdom come with age,
Men may the old out run, but not out wit.
Thus Saturn, though it scarcely did befit
His nature so to do, devised a plan
To quiet all the strife, and thus began
"Now my dear daughter Venus " quoth Saturn,
"My course, which has so wide a way to turn,
Has power more than any man may know
Mine is the drowning in the sea below,
underneath the moat,
roat,

And vengeance and
ne,
While yet I dwell within the Lion's sign
Mine is the ruining of all high halls,
And tumbling down of towers and of walls
Upon the miner and the carpenter
I struck down Samson, that pillar shaker;
And mine are all the maladies so cold,
The treasons dark, the machinations old,
lence

it,

the less
Between you two there
ame peace,
And though you be not of one temperament,
Causing each day such violent dissent,
I am your grandsire and obey your will,
Weep then no more, your pleasure I ll fulfill "
Now will I cease to speak of gods above,
Of Mars and Venus, goddess of all love,
And tell you now, as plainly as I can,
The great result, for which I first began

And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
With othere rytes mo, and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe
he herde a murmuringe

rede.

ne,

e throte;

The groyning, and the p
ing
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
Whyl I dwelle in the signe of the Leoun.
Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Up-on the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampsoun in shaking the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
lence

theles

HERE ENDETH

THE FOURTH PART

Gave everyone such joy
That all that Monday they'd but joust and dance,
Or spend the time in Venus' high service.

Greet was the feste in Athénës that day,
And eek the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.

But by the cause that they sholde ryse
Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wente they at night
And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and clateringe
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute,
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys
Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
So uncouth and so riche and wroght so weel
Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel,
The sheeldes brighte, testers and trappures,
Gold hewen helmes, hauberks cote armures,
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
Nailinge the speres, and helmes bokelinge,

With shorte staves thikke as they may goon,
Pypes trompes, nakers clariounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes,
The paleys ful of peples up and doun
Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Divyninge of thise Theban knightes two
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so,
Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled somme with the thikke herd
Somme sayde he loked grim and he wolde fighte,
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte
Thus was the halle ful of divyninge,

Honoured, were into the paleys fet
Duk Theseus was at a window set,

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
Til al the noyse of peple was y do,

But for the reason that they must arise

The gold hewn casques the coats of arms the rings
The lords in vestments rich on their coursers

Here three there ten debating the renown

haired

Arrayed as he were god upon a throne.
Then pressed the people thitherward full soon
To see him and to do him reverence

No shall a knight against opponent ride

Shall not be slain, but brought to barrier,
Whereof there shall be one on either side,

The voices of the people rent the skies,
Such was the uproar of their merry cries
'Now God save such a lord, who is so good
He will not have destruction of men's blood!"
Up start the trumpets and make melody

With the two Theban knights on either side;
And, following, rode the queen and Emily,
And, after, came another company
Of one and other, each in his degree

Into the seats then pressed the lesser rout
And westward through the gate of Mars, right
hearty,
Arcita and the hundred of his party
With banner red is entering anon,
And in that self same moment, Palamon
Is under Venus, eastward in that place,
With banner white, and resolute of face
In all the world searching it up and down,
So equal were they all, from heel to crown,
There were no two such bands in any way
For there was no man wise enough to say
How either had of other advantage
In high repute, or in estate, or age,
So even were they chosen, as I guess
And in two goodly ranks they did then dress
And when the name was called of every one,
That cheating in their number might be none

And there's no more to say, for east and west
Two hundred spears are firmly laid in rest,
And the sharp spurs are thrust, now, into side
Now see men who can joust and who can ride!
Now shivered are the shafts on bucklers thick,
One feels through very breast bone the spear's
prick;
Lances are flung full twenty feet in height,
Out flash the swords like silver burnished bright.

But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere,
Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde,
But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On either syde, or elles slee his make,

So loude cryden they with mery stevene
"God save swich a lord, that is so good,
He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!"
Up goon the trompes and the melodye
And to the listes rit the companye

And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
And after that another companye
Of oon and other, after hir degree
And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
And to the listes come they by tyme.
It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,
Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
Ipolita the quene and Emelye,
And other ladies in degrees aboute.
Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route
And west-ward, thurgh the gates under
Marte,
Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
With baner reed is entred right anon;
And in that selve moment Palamon
Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,
With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
In al the world, to seken up and doun,
So even with-outen variacioun,
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,
That any hadde of other avauntage
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So even were they chosen, for to gesse
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,

Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest,
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
Ther seen men who can juste, and who can ryde;
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke,
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the
prikke
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.

The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede,
Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede
With mighty maces the bones they to breste
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al

As forward was, right ther he moste abyde,
Another lad is on that other syde
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste

So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
For jelous herte upon this Palamoun
Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite
The jelous strokes on hir helmes byte,
Out renneth blood on both hir sydes rede
  Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede,
For er the sonne un to the reste wente,
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte,
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and y drawe unto the stake
And in the rescous of this Palamoun
The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun,
And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,

By force, and eek by composicioun
  Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
Un to the folk that foghten thus echoon
He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
I wol be trewe juge, and no partye
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,
That by his fortune hath hir faire y wonne"
  Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
For joye of this, so loude and heigh withalle,
It semed that the listes sholde falle
  What can now faire Venus doon above?
What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
Til that hir teres in the listes fille,
She seyde "I am ashamed, doutelees"
Saturnus seyde 'Doghter, hold thy pees

At times Duke Theseus orders them to rest
To eat a bite and drink what each likes best
And many times that day those Thebans two
Met in the fight and wrought each other woe
Unhorsed each has the other on that day
No tigress in the vale of Galgophey[1]
Whose little whelp is stolen in the light
Is cruel to the hunter as Arcite
For jealousy is cruel to Palamon
Nor in Belmarie when the hunt is on
Is there a lion wild for want of food
That of his prey desires so much the blood
As Palamon the death of Arcite there
Their jealous blows fall on their helmets fair,
Out leaps the blood and makes their two sides red

And made his sword deep in the flesh to bite,
And by the force of twenty men he s made,
Unyielded to withdraw to barricade

Theban Arcita sha l have Emily
Who by his fortune has her fairly won
  And now a noise of people is begun
For joy of this so loud and shrill withal
It seems as if the very lists will fall
  But now what can fair Venus do above?
What says she now? What does this queen of love

[1]Probably the vale of Gargaphie where Actæon was turned into a stag

Mars has his will, his knight has all his boon,
And, by my head, you shall be eased, and soon."
The trumpeters and other minstrelsy,
The heralds that did loudly yell and cry,
Were at their best for joy of Arcita
But hear me further while I tell you—ah!—
The miracle that happened there anon
This fierce Arcita doffs his helmet soon,
And mounted on a horse, to show his face,
He spurs from end to end of that great place,
Looking aloft to gaze on Emily,
And she cast down on him a friendly eye
(For women, generally speaking go
Wherever Fortune may her favor show),
And she was fair to see, and held his heart
But from the ground infernal furies start,
From Pluto sent at instance of Saturn,
Whereat his horse, for fear, began to turn
And leap aside, all suddenly falling there,
And Arcita before he could beware

So ran the surging blood into his face
Anon they carried him from out that place,
With heavy hearts, to Theseus' palace
There was his harness cut away, each lace,
And swiftly was he laid upon a bed,
For he was yet alive and some words said,
Crying and calling after Emily
Duke Theseus, with all his company,

Who'd got a lance head thrust through his breast bone
For other bruises, wounds and broken arms,
Some of them carried salves and some had charms,
And medicines of many herbs, and sage
They drank, to keep their limbs from hemorrhage.
In all of which this duke, as he well can,
Now comforts and now honours every man,

Since being thrown is fortune of the game,
Nor is it, to be led to barrier,
Unyielded, and by twenty knights' power,
One man alone, surrounded by the foe,
Driven by arms, and dragged out, heel and toe,
And with his courser driven forth with staves
Of men on foot, yeomen and serving knaves—

Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone."
The trompes, with the loude minstralcye,
The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,
Been in hir wele for joye of daun Arcite
But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
Which a miracle ther bifel anon
This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward up-on this Emelye,
And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë,
(For wommen, as to speken in comune,
They folwen al the favour of fortune),
And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep,
And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
That in the place he lay as he were deed,
His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
Anon he was y-born out of the place
With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,
For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alway crying after Emelye
Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal ben heled of his maladye
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes,
Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a justes or a tourneyinge,
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure,
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take
O persone allone, with-outen mo,
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,

It nas aretted him no vileinye,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye
  For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feste dayes three,
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but "far wel, have good
  day!"
Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite
  Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreesseth at his herte more and more
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,

Is shent with venim and corrupcioun
Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf,
Vomyt upward, ne dounward laxatif,
Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
Nature hath now no dominacioun

And Palamon, that was his cosin dere,
Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here
  "Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
To yow, my lady, that I love most,
But I biquethe the service of my gost
To yow aboven every creature,

Allone, with-outen any compaignye
Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!
And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
  I have heer with my cosin Palamon
Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
For love of yow, and for my jelousye
And Jupiter so wis my soule gye,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstaunces trewely,
That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,

All this imputes to one no kind of vice,
And no man may bring charge of cowardice.

day
I'll say no more of war, but turn upon
My tale of Arcita and Palamon
  Swells now Arcita's breast until the sore
Increases near his heart yet more and more.
The clotted blood, in spite of all leech craft,
Rots in his bulk, and there it must be left,

And every tissue in his breast, and down,
Is foul with poison and all rotten grown
He gains in neither, in his strife to live,
By vomiting or taking laxative,
All is so broken in that part of him,
Nature retains no vigour there, nor vim

And then he said to them as you shall hear
  "Naught may the woeful spirit in my heart
Declare one point of how my sorrows smart
To you, my lady, whom I love the most,
But I bequeath the service of my gh

To speak about a lover properly,
With all the circumstances, faithfully!—
That is to say, truth, honour, and knighthood,

As I was never there, I cannot say
Where, so I stop, not being a soothsayer,
Of souls here naught shall I enregister,
Nor do I wish their notions, now, to tell
Who write of them, though they say where they
 dwell
Arcita's cold, Mars guides his soul on high,
Now will I speak forthwith of Emily
 Shrieked Emily and howled now Palamon,

When their good husband from their side must go,
And for the greater part, they take on so,
Or else they fall into such malady
That, at the last, and certainly they die
 Infinite were the sorrows and the tears
Of all old folk and folk of tender years
Throughout the town, at death of this Theban,
For him there wept the child and wept the man,
So great a weeping was not, 'tis certain,
When Hector was brought back, but newly slain,
To Troy Alas, the sorrow that was there!

Since he had seen them changing up and down,
Joy after woe, and woe from happiness
He showed them, by example, the process
 "Just as there never died a man," quoth he,
"But he had lived on earth in some degree,

Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede,
Fredom, and al that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne knowe I non
So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf
And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man."
 And with that word his speche faille gan,
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome.
And yet more-over, in his armes two
The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago
Only the intellect, with-outen more,
That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,
Dusked his eyen two, and failled breeth,
But on his lady yet caste he his yë,
His laste word was, "mercy, Emelye!"
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen where
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre,
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they
 dwelle
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye,
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye
 Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certeinly they dye
 Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban,
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man,
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-broght, al fresh y-slayn,
To Troye, allas! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer
"Why woldestow be deed," thise wommen crye,
"And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?"
No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savinge his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse·
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse
 "Right as ther deyed never man," quod he,
"That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man," he seyde,
"In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore "
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more

To this effect, ful wysly to enhorte
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte
Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best y maked be,
And eek most honurable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fyr, in which th'office
Funeral he mighte al accomplice,
And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe
The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne,
His officers with swifte feet they renne
And ryde anon at his comaundement
And after this, Theseus hath y sent
After a bere, and it al over spradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde

He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
Therwith he weep that pitee was to here
And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun
Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,
In clothes blake, y dropped al with teres,
And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,
The rewfulleste of al the companye
In as muche as the service sholde be

Another his spere up in his hondes heeld,

That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
Right of the same is al the strete y wrye
Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,
And on that other syde duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn,
Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye,
And after that cam woful Emelye,

For good Arcita as it best might be
And one most worthy of his high degree
And at the last concluded hereupon
That where at first Arcita and Palamon
Had fought for love, with no man else between,
There in that very grove so sweet and green,
Where he mused on his amorous desires

And ride away to do his whole intent

And so that every several rite should be
Noble and rich, and suiting his degree
Duke Theseus commanded that they bring

With fire in hands as use was to ignite
The sacrifice and set the pyre alight
Great labour and full great apparelling
Went to the service and the fire making
For to the skies that green pyre reached its top,
And twenty fathoms did the arms out crop
That is to say the branches went so wide
Full many a load of straw they did provide
But how the fire was made to climb so high
Or what names all the different trees went by
As oak fir birch asp alder poplar holm
Willow plane ash box chestnut linden elm
Laurel thorn maple beech yew dogwood tree,
Or how they were felled shan't be told by me
Nor how the wood gods scampered up and down
Driven from homes that they had called their own
Wherein they'd lived so long at ease in peace
The nymphs the fauns the hamadryades
Nor how the beasts for fear and the birds all
Fled when that ancient wood began to fall
Nor how aghast the ground was in the light
Not being used to seeing the sun so bright
Nor how the fire was started first with straw
And then with dry wood riven thrice by saw,
And then with green wood and with spicery
And then with cloth of gold and jewellery
And garlands hanging with full many a flower,
And myrrh and incense sweet as rose in bower
Nor how Arcita lies among all this
Nor what vast wealth about his body is
Nor how this Emily as was their way
Lighted the sacred funeral fire that day
Nor how she swooned when men built up the fire
Nor what she said nor what was her desire
No, nor what gems men on the fire then cast
When the white flame went high and burned so fast
Nor how one cast his shield and one his spear
And some their vestments, on that burning bier
With cups of wine and cups of milk, and blood
Into that flame which burned as wild fire would
Nor how the Greeks, in one huge wailing rout
Rode slowly three times all the fire about
Upon the left hand with a loud shouting
And three times more with weapons clattering
While thrice the women there raised up a cry
Nor how was homeward led sad Emily
Nor how Arcita burned to ashes cold
Nor aught of how the lichwake they did hold
All that same night, nor how the Greeks did play

Who naked wrestled best with oil anointed
Nor who best bore himself in deeds appointed
I will not even tell how they were gone
Home, into Athens, when the play was done
But briefly to the point now, will I wend
And make of this, my lengthy tale an end
With passing in their length of certain years,
All put by was the mourning and the tears
Of Greeks, as by one general assent
And then it seems there was a parliament
At Athens, upon certain points in case
Among the which points spoken of there was

With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
To do th'office of funeral servyse
Heigh labour, and ful greet apparaillinge
Was at the service and the fyr makinge,
That with his grene top the heven raughte,
And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte,
This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode
Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte,
As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippel tree
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me,
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides,
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle,
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright,
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, th'encens with al so greet odour,
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is,
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse,
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr,
Ne what jeweles men in the fyr tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste,
Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were,
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood,
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres claterynge,
And thryës how the ladies gonne crye,
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye,
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde,
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye,
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disjoynt
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athénës, whan the pley is doon,
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende
By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres
Of Grekes, by oon general assent,
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athénës, up-on certeyn poynts and cas,
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was

To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce
For which this noble Theseus anon
Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him what was the cause and why;
But in his blake clothes sorwefully
He cam at his comaundemente in hye.
Tho sente Theseus for Emelye
Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hadde a space
Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he syked stille,
And after that right thus he seyde his wille
"The firste moevere of the cause above,
Whan he first made the fair cheyne of love,
Greet was th'effect, and heigh was his entente,
Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente;
For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee,
That same prince and that moevere," quod he,
"*Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,*
Certeyne dayes and duracioun

And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
That speces of thinges and progressiouns
Shullen enduren by successiouns,
And nat eterne be, with-oute lyë
This maistow understonde and seen at yë
"Lo the ook, that hath so long a norisshinge

Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye
The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye
The grete tounes see we wane and wende
Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende
"Of man and womman seen we wel also,
That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page,
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se,
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye

The ratifying of alliances
That should hold Thebes from all defiances
Whereat this noble Theseus, anon,
Invited there the gentle Palamon,

When they were seated and was hushed the place,
And Theseus had mused a little space,

Yet at the last all wasted is the tree
'Consider, too, how even the hard stone
Under our feet we tread each day upon
Yet wastes it, as it lies beside the way
And the broad river will be dry some day

'Then is it wisdom as it seems to me,
To make a virtue of necessity,
And calmly take what we may not eschew,
And specially that which to all is due
Whoso would balk at aught, he does folly,
And thus rebels against His potency

Hence it is best for all of noble name

Though yet they may not their desires amend
  What may I prove by this long argument
Save that we all turn to merriment,
After our grief, and give Jove thanks for grace
And so before we go from out this place,
I counsel that we make of sorrows two,

With the advice of this my Parliament,
That gentle Palamon your own true knight,
Who serves you well with will and heart and might,
And so has ever, since you knew him first—
That you shall of your grace allay his thirst
By taking him for husband and for lord
Lend me your hand for this is our accord
Let now your woman s pity make him glad
For he is a king s brother's son by gad
And though he were a poor knight bachelor,
Since he has served you for so many a year,
And borne for you so great adversity,
This ought to weigh with you it seems to me,
For mercy ought to dominate mere right "
  Then said he thus to Palamon the knight

By all the council and the baronage.

What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve
  "Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to him that al may gye
And certeinly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his gode name,
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age,
For al forgeten is his vasselage
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse
Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
Departed is, with duetee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende
  "What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of al his grace?
And, er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt joye, lasting ever-mo,
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is herinne,
Ther wol we first amenden and biginne
  "Suster," quod he, "this is my fulle assent,
With al th'avys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might,
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe,
And taken him for housbonde and for lord.
Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.
Lat see now of your wommanly pitee
He is a kinges brother sone, pardee,
And, though he were a povre bacheler,
Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
And had for yow so greet adversitee,
It moste been considered, leveth me,
For gentil mercy oghte to passen right "
  Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;
"I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
To make yow assente to this thing
Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond "
  Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By al the counseil and the baronage.

And thus with alle blisse and melodye
Hath Palamon y wedded Emelye

Of jelousye, or any other tene
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye,
And God save al this faire companye!
Amen.

Amen

HERE IS ENDED THE KNIGHT'S TALE

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE WORDS BETWEEN THE HOST AND THE MILLER

WHAN that the Knight had thus his tale y told,
In al the route nas ther yong ne old
That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
And worthy for to drawen to memorie,
And namely the gentils everichoon
Our Hoste lough and swoor, so moot I goon,
This gooth aright unbokeled is the male,
Lat see now who shal telle another tale
For trewely, the game is wel bigonne
Now telleth ye sir Monk if that ye conne,
Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale"
The Miller, that for dronken was al pale,
So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,
He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,
But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
And swoor by armes and by blood and bones,
I can a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quyte the Knightes tale"
Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale,
And seyde abyd, Robin, my leve brother,
Som bettre man shal telle us first another

and
some!
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun,
And therfore if that I misspeke or seye

thy
clappe,
Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,

Some better man shall tell us first another
Submit and let us work on profitably"
Now by God s soul cried he that w ll not I!
For I will speak or else I ll go my way
Our host replied 'Tell on then till doomsday!
You are a fool, your wit is overcome
Now hear me said the miller all and
some!
But first I make protestation round

trap
Let be your gnorant drunken ribaldry!
It is a sin and further great folly
To asperse any man or him defame

The man who has no wife is no cuckold
But I say not, thereby, that you are one
Many good wives there are, as women run,
And ever a thousand good to one that's bad,
As well you know yourself, unless you're mad.
Why are you angry with my story's cue?
I have a wife, begad, as well as you,

I will believe full well that I am none

And therefore, every gentle soul, I pray
That for God's love you'll hold not what I say
Evilly meant, but that I must rehearse

And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame
Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn."
  This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,
And seyde, "leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;
Ther been ful gode wyves many oon,
And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde,

Taken up-on me more than y-nogh,
As demen of my-self that I were oon;
I wol beleve wel that I am noon
An housbond shal nat been inquisitif
Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.
So he may finde goddes foyson there,
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquere.'
  What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
But tolde his cherles tales in his manere;
Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here.
And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,
For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce
Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my matere.
And therefore, who-so list it nat y-here,
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale,
For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
And eek moralitee and holinesse,
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
So was the Reeve, and othere many mo,
And harlotrye they tolden bothe two
Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame,
And eek men shal nat make ernest of game.

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGUE

THE MILLER'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE MILLER HIS TALE

Once on a time was dwelling in Oxford
A wealthy lout who took in guests to board,

And knew a certain set of theorems
And could find out by various stratagems,
If men but asked of him in certain hours
When they should have a drought or else have
  showers,
Or if men asked of him what should befall
To anything—I cannot reckon them all
  This clerk was called the clever Nicholas;
Of secret loves he knew and their solace;

Whylom ther was dwellinge at Oxenford
A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,

And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns
To demen by interrogaciouns,
If that men axed him in certein houres,
Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles
  shoures,
Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle
Of everything, I may nat rekene hem alle.
  This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;
Of derne love he coude and of solas;

And ther to he was sleigh and ful privee,
And lyk a mayden meke for to see
A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
Allone, with-outen any companye,
Ful fetisly y dight with herbes swote,
And he him self as swete as is the rote
Of licorys or any cetewale

His presse y-covered with a falding reed
And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,
On which he made a nightes melodye
So swetely, that al the chambre rong,
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song,
And after that he song the kinges note,
Ful often blessed was his mery throte
And thus this swete clerk his tyme spente
After his freendes finding and his rente
  This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyfe
Which that he lovede more than his lyf,
Of eightetene yeer she was of age
Jalous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,
For she was wilde and yong, and he was old,
And demed him self ben lyk a cokewold
He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
That bad man sholde wedde his similitude
Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,
For youthe and elde is often at debaat
But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
He moste endure, as other folk, his care

And sikerly she hadde a likerous yë
Ful smale y pulled were hir browes two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo
She was ful more blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere jonette tree,
And softer than the wolle is of a wether
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether
Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.
In al this world, to seken up and doun,
There nis no man so wys that coude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche
Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe
Than in the tour the noble y forged newe
But of hir song it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittinge on a berne
Ther to she coude skippe and make
  game,
As any kide or calf folwinge his dame

And he kept counsel too for he was sly
And meek as any maiden passing by

Whereon he made an evening s melody
Playing so sweetly that the chamber rang
And *Angelus ad virginem* he sang
And after that he warbled the *King s Note*
Often in good voice was his merry throat

And she was come to eighteen years of age

The strings of the white cap upon her head
Were like her collar black silk worked with thread
Her fillet was of wide silk worn full high

sham
Like any kid or calf about its dam.

[1]Counting stones.

Her mouth was sweet as bragget or as mead
Or hoard of apples laid in hay or weed

As broad as boss of buckler did it show,

That on a day this clever Nicholas
Fell in with this young wife to toy and play,
The while her husband was down Osney way,

And said "O darling, love me, love me now,
Or I shall die, and pray you God may save!"
  And she leaped as a colt does in the trave,[1]

Or I will call for help and cry 'alas!'

I know I'm just as good as dead," said she
"You must keep all quite hidden in this case"
  "Nay, thereof worry not," said Nicholas,
"A clerk has lazily employed his while
If he cannot a carpenter beguile"
  And thus they were agreed, and then they swore
To wait a while, as I have said before
When Nicholas had done thus every whit
And patted her about the loins a bit,
He kissed her sweetly, took his psaltery,
And played it fast and made a melody
  Then fell it thus, that to the parish kirk,
The Lord Christ Jesus' own works for to work,

Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Winsinge she was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler,
As brood as is the bos of a bocler.

That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
As clerks ben ful subtile and ful queynte,
And prively he caughte hir by the queynte,
And seyde, "y-wis, but if ich have my wille,
For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille"
And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,
And seyde, "lemman, love me al at-ones,
Or I wol dyen, also god me save!"
And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave,[1]
And with hir heed she wryed faste awey,
And seyde, "I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,
Why, lat be," quod she, "lat be, Nicholas,
Or I wol crye out 'harrow' and 'allas'
Do wey your handes for your curteisye!"
  This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,
That she hir love him graunted atte laste,
And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandement,
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.
"Myn housbond is so ful of jalousye
That but ye wayte wel and been privee,
I woot right wel I nam but deed," quod she
"Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas"
  "Nay ther-of care thee noght," quod Nicholas,
"A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,
But-if he coude a carpenter bigyle"
And thus they been acorded and y-sworn
To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,
And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,
He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye,
And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye
Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,
Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,
an haliday,
ght as any day,
she leet hir werk
hirche a parish-clerk,
ped Absolon
s the gold it shoon,
arge and brode,
his joly shode
en greye as goos,
even on his shoos,
tisly
nd proprely,
chet,

Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.

In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
That he ne visited with his solas,

And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
And namely on this carpenteres wyf
To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,
She was so propre and swete and likerous.

For paramours, he thoghte for to wake
And forth he gooth, jolif and amorous,
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous
A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe,
And dressed him up by a shot-windowe
That was up-on the carpenteres wal
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal,
'Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,"
Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge
This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,
And spak un to his wyf, and seyde anon,
' What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon
That chaunteth thus under our boures wal?"
And she answerde hir housbond therwith al,
"Yis, god wot, John, I here it every del"

He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale,

Holes for the lacings which were fairly set
And over all he wore a fine surplice
As white as ever hawthorn spray and nice.
A merry lad he was so God me save,
And well could he let blood cut hair and shave,

And as well could he play on his guitar
In all the town no inn was and no bar,

He acted Herod on a scaffold high
  But what availed it him in any case?
She was enamoured so of Nicholas
That Absalom might go and blow his horn;
He got naught for his labour *but her scorn*
And thus she made of Absalom her ape,
And all his earnestness she made a jape
For truth is in this proverb, and no lie,
Men say well thus It's always he that's nigh
That makes the absent lover seem a sloth
For now, though Absalom be wildly wroth,
Because he is so far out of her sight,
This handy Nicholas stands in his light
  Now bear you well, you clever Nicholas!
For Absalom may wail and sing "Alas!"
And so it chanced that on a Saturday
This carpenter departed to Osney,
And clever Nicholas and Alison
Were well agreed to this effect anon
This Nicholas should *put in play* a wile
The simple, jealous husband to beguile;
And if it chanced the game should go a-right,
She was to sleep within his arms all night,
For this was his desire, and hers also
Presently then, and without more ado,
This Nicholas, no longer did he tarry
But softly to his chamber did he carry
Both food and drink to last at least a day,
Saying that to her husband she should say—
If he should come to ask for Nicholas—
Why, she should say she knew not where he was,
For all day she'd not seen him, far or nigh,
She thought he must have got some malady,
Because in vain her maid would knock and call,
He'd answer not, whatever might befall
  And so it was that all that Saturday
This Nicholas quietly in chamber lay,
And ate and slept, or did what pleased him best,
Till Sunday *when the sun had gone to rest*
  This simple man with wonder heard the tale,
And marvelled what their Nicholas might ail,
And said "I am afraid, by Saint Thomas,
That everything's not well with Nicholas.
God send he be not dead so suddenly!
This world is most unstable, certainly,
I saw, today, the corpse being borne to kirk
Of one who, but last Monday, was at work.
Go up," said he unto his boy anon,
"Call at his door, or knock there with a stone,
Learn how it is and boldly come tell me"
  The servant went up, then, right sturdily,
And at the chamber door, the while he stood
He cried and knocked as any madman would—
"What! How! What do you, Master Nicholay?
How can you sleep through all the livelong day?"
  But all for naught, he never heard a word,
A hole he found, low down upon a board,
Through which the house cat had been wont to creep;
And to that hole he stooped, and through did peep,
And finally he ranged him in his sight.
This Nicholas sat gaping there, upright,

He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.
But what availleth him as in this cas?
She loveth so this hende Nicholas,
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn:
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,
And al his ernest turneth til a jape
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
Men seyn right thus, "alwey the nye slye
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth"
For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,
By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte,
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte
  Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!
For Absolon may waille and singe "allas."
Ans so bifel it on a Saterday,
This carpenter was goon til Osenay;
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle
This sely jalous housbond to bigyle;
And if so be the game wente aright,
She sholde slepen in his arm al night,
For this was his desyr and hir also.
And right anon, with-outen wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie
Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,
And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
She sholde seye she niste where he was,
Of al that day she saugh him nat with yë,
She trowed that he was in maladye,
For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;
He nolde answere, for no-thing that mighte falle.
  This passeth forth al thilke Saterday,
That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,
And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,
Til *Sonday, that the sonne gooth to reste.*
  This sely carpenter hath greet merveyle
Of Nicholas, or what thing *mighte him eyle,*
And seyde, "I am adrad, by seint Thomas,
It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas
God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!
This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;
I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche
That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche.
  Go up," quod he un-to his knave anoon,
"Clepe at his dore, or knokke with a stoon,
Loke how it is, and tel me boldely."
  This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood,
He cryde and knokked as that he were wood —
"What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?
How may ye slepen al the longe day?"
  But al for noght, he herde nat a word;
An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,
And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.
This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,

As he had kyked on the newe mone
Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone
In what array he saugh this ilke man
  This carpenter to blessen him bigan,
And seyde, help us, seinte Frideswyde!
A man woot litel what him shal bityde
This man is falle with his astromye [1]
In som woodnesse or in some agonye,
I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!
Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privetee
Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,
That noght but only his bileve can!

  Get me a staf, that I may underspore,
Whyl that thou Robin, hevest up the dore

In to the floor the dore fil anon
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
And ever gaped upward in to the eir
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,
And hente him by the sholdres mightily,
And shook him harde and cryde spitously,
  What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke
    adoun
Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun,
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!
Ther with the night-spel seyde he anon rightes
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threshfold of the dore withoute —
  Jesu Crist, and seynt Benedight
  Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,

Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?
  This carpenter answerde, what seystow?

... thyng that toucheth me and t
I wol telle it non other man, certeyn

  Thou shalt up-on thy trouthe swere me
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil
For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,

As if he d looked too long at the new moon
Do vnstairs he went and told his master soon

Into some madness or some agony

So fared another clerk with astromy
He valked into the meadows for to pry
Into the stars to learn what should befall
Until into a clay p t he d d fall
He saw not that But yet, by Saint Thomas

H s servant was a stout lad if a dunce
And by the hasp he heaved it up at once
Upon the floor that portal fell anon
This N cholas sat there as still as stone
Gazing with gap ng mouth stra ght up in air
This carpenter thought he was in despa r
And took h m by the shoulders mightily
And shook h m hard and cried out vehemently
  What! Nicholay! Why how now! Come look
    down!
Awake and think on Jesus death and crown!
I cross you from all elves and mag c wights!

A u after vard I u te I you privately

And if you tell a man you're ruined quite
This punishment shall come to you of right,
That if you're traitor you'll go mad—and should!'
'Nay, Christ forbid it for His holy blood!'
Said then this simple man 'I am no blab
Nor though I say it am I fond of gab
Say what you will I never will it tell
To child or wife by Him that harried Hell!
'Now John,' said Nicholas 'I will not lie,
But I've found out, from my astrology
As I have looked upon the moon so bright
That now, come Monday next, at nine of night
Shall fall a rain so wildly mad as would
Have been by half greater than Noah's flood
This world,' he said 'in less time than an hour,
Shall all be drowned so terrible is this shower
Thus shall all mankind drown and lose all life'
This carpenter replied 'Alas my wife!
And shall she drown? Alas my Alison!'
For grief of this he almost fell Anon
He said 'Is there no remedy in this case?'
'Why yes good luck' said clever Nicholas
'If you will work by counsel of the wise
You must not act on what your wits advise
For so says Solomon and it's all true
Work by advice and thou shalt never rue
And if you'll act as counselled and not fail
I undertake without a mast or sail
To save us all aye you and her and me
Haven't you heard of Noah how saved was he
Because Our Lord had warned him how to keep
Out of the flood that covered earth so deep?'
'Yes,' said this carpenter, 'long years ago'
'Have you not heard' asked Nicholas 'also
The sorrows of Noah and his fellowship
In getting his wife to go aboard the ship?
He would have rather I dare undertake
At that time and for all the weather black
That she had one ship fo herself alone
Therefore do you know what would best be done?
This thing needs haste and of a hasty thing
Men must not preach nor do long tarrying
Presently go and fetch here to this inn
A kneading tub or brewing vat and win
One each for us, but see that they are large,
Wherein we may swim out as in a barge
And have therein sufficient food and drink
For one day only that's enough I think
The water will dry up and flow away
About the prime of the succeeding day
But Robin must not know of this your knave,
And even Jill your maid I may not save,
Ask me not why for though you do ask me,
I will not tell you of God's privity
Suffice you then unless your wits are mad
To have as great a grace as Noah had
Your wife I shall not lose, there is no doubt,
Go now your way and speedily get about,
But when you have, for you and her and me,
Procured these kneading tubs, or beer vats, three,
Then you shall hang *them near the roof tree high,*
That no man our purveyance may espy

And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore,
For this vengaunce thou shalt han therfore,
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!"
"Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!"
Quod tho this sely man, "I nam no labbe,
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!"
"Now John," quod Nicholas, "I wol nat lye,
I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
As I have loked in the mone bright,
That now, a Monday next, at quarter night,
Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,
That half so greet was never Noës flood
This world," he seyde, "in lasse than in an hour
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour,
Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf"
This carpenter answerde, "allas, my wyf!
And shal she drenche? allas! myn Alisoun!"
For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
And seyde, "is ther no remedie in this cas?"
"Why, yis, for gode," quod hende Nicholas,
"If thou wolt werken after lore and reed,
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
"Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe"
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, with-outen mast and seyl,
Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me
Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,
Whan that our lord had warned him biforn
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?"
"Yis," quod this carpenter, "ful yore ago."
"Hastow nat herd," quod Nicholas, "also
The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,
Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?
Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone
And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?
This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing
Men may nat preche or maken tarying
Anon go gete us faste in-to this in
A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,
For ech of us, but loke that they be large,
In which we mowe swimme as in a barge,
And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant
But for a day, fy on the remenant!
The water shal aslake and goon a-way
Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day
But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave,
Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save,
Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
I wol nat tellen goddes privetee
Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde
Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,
Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-aboute
But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,
Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,
Than shaltow hange *hem in the roof ful hye,*
That no man of our purveyaunce spye

And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyd,
And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyd,
And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
When that the water comth, that we may go,
And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,
Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth our way
Whan that the grete shour is goon away—
Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake,
As doth the whyte doke after hir drake
Than wol I clepe, "how! Alisoun! how! John!
Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."
And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister Nicholay!
Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day."
And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.
  But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
That we ben entred in-to shippes bord,
That noon of us ne speke nat a word,

Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon,
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf,
Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf."
  Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccioun!

Of time to make a longer sermoning.
Men say thus: "Send the wise and say
  nothing"
You are so wise it needs not that I teach;

With bread and cheese and good jugged ale, enough
To satisfy the needs of one full day
But ere he'd put all this in such array
He sent his servants, boy and maid, right down
Upon some errand into London town
And on the Monday, when it came on night,
He shut his door without a candle-light
And ordered everything as *it* should be
And shortly after up they climbed all three,
They sat while *one* might plow a furlong way
Now, by Our Father, hush!" said Nicholay,
And "Hush!" said John, and "Hush!" said Alison
This carpenter, his loud dev*otions* done,
Sat silent, saying mentally *a prayer,*
And waiting for the rain, to hear it there
The deathlike sleep of utter weariness
Fell on this wood-wright even (as I guess)
Also at the curfew time, or little more
For travail of his spirit he groaned sore
And soon he snored, for badly his head lay
Down by the *ladder* crept this *Nicholay*
And Alison, right softly down she sped
Without more words they went and got in bed
Even where *the carpenter was wont to lie*
There was the *revel* and the melody!
And thus lie Alison and Nicholas
In joy that goes by many an alas
Until the bells for lauds began to ring
And friars to *the chancel went to sing*
This parish clerk, this amorous Absalom
Whom love has made so woebegone and dumb,
Upon the Monday was down Osney way
With company, to find some sport and play
And there he chanced to ask a cloisterer
Privately, after John the carpenter
This monk drew him apart, out of the kirk
And said "I have not seen him *here* at work
Since Saturday, I think, well that he went
For timber, that the abbot has him sent
For he is wont for timber thus to go,
Remaining at the grange a day *or so*
Or else he's surely at his house today,
But which it is I cannot truly say
This Absalom right happy was and light
And thought "Now is the time to wake all night,
For certainly I saw him not *stirring*
About his door since day began to spring
So may I thrive, as I shall, at cock's crow
Knock cautiously upon that window low
Which is so placed *upon* his bedroom wall
To Alison then *will I tell of all*
My love-longing, and thus I shall not miss
That at the least I'll have her *lips to kiss.*
Some sort of comfort shall I have, I say,
My mouth's been itching all this livelong day,
That is a *sign* of kissing at the least
All night I dreamed, too, I was at a feast
Therefore I'll go and sleep two hours away,
And all this night then will I wake and play"
And so when time of first cock-crow was come,
Up rose this merry lover, Absalom,

With breed and chese, and good ale in a jubbe,
Suffysinge right ynogh as for a day
But er that he had maad al this array,
He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
Up-on his nede to London for to go
And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,
He shette his dore *with-oute* candel light,
And dressed al thing as it sholde be
And shortly, up they clomben alle three,
They sitten stille wel a furlong-way
"Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!" syde Nicholay,
And "clom," quod John, and "clom," seyde Alisoun
This carpenter seyde his devocioun,
And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,
Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here
The dede sleep, for wery bisinesse,
Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,
Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more,
For travail of his goost *he groneth sore*,
And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay
Doun of the *laddre* stalketh *Nicholay*,
And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde,
With-outen wordes mo, they goon to bedde
Ther as the carpenter is wont to lye.
Ther was the revel and the melodye,
And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,
In bisinesse of mirthe and of solas,
Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe,
And freres in the chauncel gonne singe
This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye
With companye, him to disporte and pleye,
And axed *up-on cas a cloisterer*
Ful prively after John the carpenter,
And he drough him a part out of the chirche,
And seyde, "I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche
Sin Saterday, I trowe that he be went
For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent,
For he is wont for timber for to go,
And dwellen at the grange a day or two,
Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn,
Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn"
This Absolon ful joly was and light,
And thoghte, "*now* is tyme wake al night,
For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe
So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe,
Ful prively knokken at his windowe
That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal
To Alison now wol I tellen al
My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse
That at the leste *wey* I shal hir kisse
Som maner *confort* shal I have, parfay,
My mouth *hath* icched al this longe day;
That *is a signe of kissing atte leste*
Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste
Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or tweye,
And al *the night* than wol I wake and pleye"
Whan that the first cok hath crowe, anon
Up rist this joly lover Absolon,

And d essed him gay and all at po nt-de ce
I

For ther by wende he to ben gracious
He rometh to the carpenteres hous
And stille he stant under the shot windowe
Un to his brest it raughte t was so lowe
And softe he cogheth w th a seim soun—
'What do ye hony-comb swete Al soun?
My faire brid my swete cinamome

He wen then to tl e carpenter s da k hou e

I s l tle thought you gi e me and my woe
Who for your love do sweat where er I go
Yet t s no wonder that I faint and sweat
I

I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete

Go f om the w ndo v jack a napes he sa d
Fo s help me God t not come k s me

Than kisse me sin t may be no bet
For Jesus love and for the love of me

ed she

I hen make you ready said she and I d
come!

And un to N cholas she seyde stille [3720a]
Now hust and thou shalt laughen al thy fille [b]
This Absolon doun sette him on his knees
And seyde I am a lord at alle degrees
For after this I hope ther cometh more
Lemman thy grace and swete brid thyn ore!
The window she undoth and that in has e
Have do quod she com of and speed thee
faste

Da l ng my swee e t b d I wa t you w ll
The w ndow she unbar ed and that n haste
Have done sa d she come on and do t
fa t
B fo e we re seen by any ne gl bou s eye
This Absa om d d w pe h s mou h all dry
Da k wa the n ght as p h aye da k as coal

I

Aback he eap —it seemed sun enov and

Teheel quod she and clapte the window
to

to

Who vigorously rubbed and scrubbed his lips
With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with chips,
But Absalom, and often cried, "Alas!
My soul I give now unto Sathanas,
For rather far than own this town," said he,
"For this despite, it's well revenged I'd be.
Alas," said he, "from her I never blenched!"
His hot love was grown cold, aye and all quenched;
For, from the moment that he'd kissed her arse,
For paramours he didn't care a curse,
For he was healed of all his malady;
Indeed all paramours he did defy,
And wept as does a child that has been beat.
With silent step he went across the street
Unto a smith whom men called Dan Jarvis,
Who in his smithy forged plow parts, that is
He sharpened shares and coulters busily.
This Absalom he knocked all easily,
And said: "Unbar here, Jarvis, for I come."
"What! Who are you?"
"It is I, it is Absalom."
"What! Absalom! For Jesus Christ's sweet tree,
Why are you up so early? *Ben'cite!*
What ails you now, man? Some gay girl, God knows,
Has brought you on the jump to my bellows;
By Saint Neot, you know well what I mean."
This Absalom cared not a single bean
For all this play, nor one word back he gave;
He'd more tow on his distaff, had this knave,
Than Jarvis knew, and said he: "Friend so dear,
This red-hot coulter in the fireplace here,
Lend it to me, I have a need for it,
And I'll return it after just a bit."
Jarvis replied: "Certainly, were it gold
Or a purse filled with yellow coins untold,
Yet should you have it, as I am true smith;
But eh, Christ's foe! What will you do therewith?"
"Let that," said Absalom, "be as it may;
I'll tell you all tomorrow, when it's day" —
And caught the coulter then by the cold steel
And softly from the smithy door did steal
And went again up to the wood-wright's wall.
He coughed at first, and then he knocked withal
Upon the window, as before, with care.
This Alison replied: "Now who is there?
And who knocks so? I'll warrant it's a thief."
"Why no," quoth he, "God knows, my sweet roseleaf,
I am your Absalom, my own darling!
Of gold," quoth he, "I have brought you a ring;
My mother gave it me, as *I'll be saved;*
Fine gold it is, and it is well engraved;
This will I give you for another kiss."
This Nicholas had risen for a piss,
And thought that it would carry on the jape
To have his arse kissed by this jack-a-nape.
And so he opened window hastily,
And put his arse out thereat quietly,
Over the buttocks, showing the whole bum;
And thereto said this clerk, this Absalom,

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,
But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, "allas!
My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas,
But me wer lever than al this toun," quod he,
"Of this despyt awroken for to be!
Allas!" quod he, "allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!"
His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;
For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers,
Of paramours he sette nat a kers,
For he was heled of his maladye;
Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,
And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.
A softe paas he wente over the strete
Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,
That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;
He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.
This Absolon knokketh al esily,
And seyde, "undo, Gerveys, and that anon."
"What, who artow?"
"It am I, Absolon."
"What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,
Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *ben'cite!*
What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,
Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot;
By seynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene."
This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;
He hadde more tow on his distaf
Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, "freend so dere,
That hote culter in the chimenee here,
As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,
And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone."
Gerveys answerde, "certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles alle untold,
Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;
Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-with?"
"Ther-of," quod Absolon, "be as be may;
I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day" —
And caughte the culter by the colde stele.
Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,
And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.
He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al
Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.
This Alison answerde, "Who is ther
That knokketh so? I warante it a theef."
"Why, nay," quod he, "god woot, my swete leef,
I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
Of gold," quod he, "I have thee broght a ring;
My moder yaf it me, so god me save,
Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave;
This wol I yeve thee, *if thou me kisse!*"
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
And thoghte he wolde amenden al the jape,
He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.
And up the windowe dide he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttok, to the haunche-bon;
And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,

'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art"
This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,
As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,
That with the strook he was almost y blent
And he was redy with his iren hoot,
And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot
Of gooth the skin an hande-brede about,
The hote culter brende so his toute,
And for the smert he wende for to dye
As he were wood for wo he gan to crye—
Help! water! water! help, for goddes herte!
This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
And herde oon cryen water as he were wood,
And thoghte, "Allas! now comth Nowelis[1] flood!'
He sit him up with-outen wordes mo,
And with his ax he smoot the corde a two
And doun goth al, he fond neither to selle,
Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the selle
Up-on the floor, and ther aswowne he lay
Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
And cryden out and harrow in the strete
The neighebores, bothe smale and
grete,
In ronnen for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan,
For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm,
But stonde he moste un to his owne harm.

three
And hadde hem hanged in the roof above,
And that he preyed hem for goddes love,
To sitten in the roof *par companye*
The folk gan laughen at his fantasye,
In to the roof they kyken and they gape,

Hearing that Water! cried as madman would
And thought Alas no v comes down Noel s[1] flood! '
He struggled up without another word
And with his axe he cut in two the cord
And dow n went all he d d not stop to trade
In bread or ale till he d the journey made

feet

For when he spoke he was at once borne down
By clever N cholas and Alison
For they told everyone that he was odd
He was so much afra d of Noel s flood
Through fantasy that out of vanity
He d gone and bought these knead ng tubs all
three

For when this carpenter got in a word
Twas all in vain no man h s reasons heard

This tale is done and God save all the rout!

[1]The carpenter s corrupt on

HERE ENDETH THE MILLER HIS TALE

THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE REEVE S TALE

When folk had laughed their fill at this nice pass
Of Absalom and clever Nicholas
Then divers folk diversely had their say
And most of them were well amused and gay,
Nor at this tale did I see one man grieve
Save it were only old Oswald the reeve
Because he was a carpenter by craft
A little anger in his heart was left
And he began to grouse and blame a bit
' S help me said he, full well could I be quit
With blearing of a haughty miller s eye
If I but chose to speak of ribaldry
But I am old I will not play for age
Grass time is done my fodder is rummage
This white top advertises my old years
My heart too, is as mouldy as my hairs
Unless I fare like medlar all perverse
For that fruit s never ripe until it's worse
And falls among the refuse or in straw
We ancient men I fear obey this law
Until we re rotten we cannot be ripe
We dance indeed the while the world will pipe
Desire sticks in our nature like a nail
To have if hoary head a verdant tail
As has the leek for though our strength be gone
Our wish is yet for folly till life s done
For when we may not act then will we speak
Yet in our ashes is there fire to reek
Four embers have we which I shall confess
Boasting and lying anger covetousness
These four remaining sparks belong to eld
Our ancient limbs may well be hard to wield
But lust will never fail us that is truth
And yet I have had always a colt s tooth
As many years as now are past and done
Since first my tap of life began to run
For certainly when I was born I know
Death turned my tap of life and let it flow
And ever since that day the tap has run
Till nearly empty now is all the tun
The stream of life now drips upon the chime [1]
The silly tongue may well ring out the time
Of wretchedness that passed so long before
For oldsters, save for dotage there s no more "
Now when our host had heard this sermoning
Then did he speak as lordly as a king
He said 'To what amounts, now all this wit?
Why should we talk all day of holy writ?
The devil makes a steward for to preach
And of a cobbler a sailor or a leech
Tell forth your tale and do not waste the time
Here s Deptford! And it is half way to prime
There s Greenwich town that many a scoundrel s in

Whan folk had laughen at this nyce cas
Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they seyde,
But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,
Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,
But it were only Osewold the Reve,
By-cause he was of carpenteres craft
A litel ire is in his herte y laft,
He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte
' So theek," quod he, ' ful wel coude I yow quyte
With blering of a proud milleres yë,
If that me liste speke of ribaudye
But ik am old, me list not pley for age,
Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,
This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,
Myn herte is al so mowled as myne heres,
But if I fare as dooth an open-ers,
That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
Til it be roten in mullok or in stree
We olde men, I drede, so fare we,
Til we be roten, can we nat be rype
We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype
For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leek, for thogh our might be goon,
Our wil desireth folie ever in oon
For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke,
Yet in our asshen olde is fyr y reke
Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse,
Thise foure sparkles longen un to elde
Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
But wil ne shal nat faillen, that is sooth.
And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
As many a yeer as it is passed henne
Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne
For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon,
And ever sith hath so the tappe y ronne,
Til that almost al empty is the tonne
The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe,[1]
The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore,
With olde folk, save dotage, is namore "
Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,
He gan to speke as lordly as a king,
He seide, "what amounteth al this wit?
What shul we speke alday of holy writ?
The devel made a reve for to preche,
And of a souter a shipman or a leche
Sey forth thy tale and tarie nat the tyme,
Lo, Depeford! and it is half way pryme
Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne,

[1] The edge or rim of a cask, formed by the projecting ends of the staves.

It were al tyme thy tale to biginne "
Now, sires quod this Osewold the Reve,
"I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve,
Thogh I answere and somdel sette his howve,
For leveful is with force force of showve
This dronke millere hath y told us heer,
How that bigyled was a carpenteer,
Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon
And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anoon,
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke
I pray to god his nekke mote breke,
He can wel in myn ye seen a stalke,
But in his owne he can nat seen a balke

It is high time your story should begin
Now sirs then said this Oswald called the reeve
I pray you all now that you will not grieve
Though I reply and somewhat twitch his cap,
It s lawful to meet force with force mayhap

All in his own boor s language will I speak.
I only pray to God his neck may break
For in my eye he well can see the mote
But sees not in his own the beam you ll note

THE REEVE'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE REEVE S TALE

Pypen he coude and fisshe, and nettes bete,
And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete,
And by his belt he baar a long panade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade

As piled as an ape was his skulle
He was a market beter atte fulle
Ther dorste no wight hand up on him legge,
That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge
A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,
And that a sly and usaunt for to stele
His name was hoten deynous Simkin

But she were wel y norissed and a mayde,
To saven his estaat of yomanrye
And she was proud and pert as is a pye
A ful fair sighte was it on hem two,
On haly dayes biforn his wolde he go
With his tipet bouden about his heed
And she cam after in a gyte of reed
And Simkin hadde hosen of the same
Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but dame "
Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,
But if he wolde be slayn of Simkin
With panade or with knyf, or boydekin.
For jalous folk ben perilous evermo,

A handsome s ght it was to see those two
On holy days before her he would go
With a broad tippet bound about his head
And she came after in a skirt of red

high,
But golden was her hair, I will not lie
The parson of the town, since she was fair,
Was purposeful to make of her his heir,
Both of his chattels and of his estate,

Though Holy Church itself became his food
Large tolls this miller took, beyond a doubt,
With wheat and malt from all the lands about,
Of which I'd specify among them all
A Cambridge college known as Soler Hall,
He ground their wheat and all their malt he ground
And on a day it happened, as they found,

A hundredfold more than he used to cheat,
For theretofore he stole but cautiously,
But now he was a thief outrageously,
At which the warden scolded and raised hell,
The miller snapped his fingers, truth to tell,
And cracked his brags and swore it wasn't so
There were two poor young clerks, whose names I know,
That dwelt within this Hall whereof I say
Willful they were and lusty, full of play,
And (all for mirth and to make revelry)
After the warden eagerly did they cry
To give them leave, at least for this one round,
To go to mill and see their produce ground,

Strother,
Far in the north, I cannot tell you where
This Alain, he made ready all his gear,
And on a horse loaded the sack anon
Forth went Alain the clerk, and also John,
With good sword and with buckler at their side
John knew the way and didn't need a guide,

Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.
And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich,
And ful of hoker and of bisemare.
Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
That she had lerned in the nonnerye.
A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo,
Savinge a child that was of half-yeer age;
In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
This wenche thikke and wel y-growen was,
With camuse nose and yën greye as glas,
With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye,
But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye
The person of the toun, for she was feir,
In purpos was to maken hir his heir
Bothe of his catel and his messuage,
And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye
In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye,
For holy churches good moot been despended
On holy churches blood, that is descended.
Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure,
Though that he holy churche sholde devoure.
Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,
With whete and malt of al the land aboute,
And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge,
Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde.
And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye,
Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye
For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn
An hundred tyme more than biforn,
For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,
But now he was a theef outrageously,
For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.
But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare,
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.
Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,
And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye,
Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde;
And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,
The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve,
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
John highte that oon, and Aleyn highte that other;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I can nat telle where
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he caste anon
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also John,
With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.
John knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde,

And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.

"Symond," quod John, "by god, nede has na peer;
Him boes serve him-selve that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;
I pray yow spede us hethen that ye may."
"It shal be doon," quod simkin, "by my fay,
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?"
"By god, right by the hoper wil I stande,"
Quod John, "and se how that the corn gas in;
Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,
How that the hoper wagges til and fra"
Aleyn answerde, "John, and wiltow swa,
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
And se how that the mele falles doun
In-to the trough, that sal be my disport.
For John, in faith, I may been of your sort,
I is as ille a miller as are ye"
Thus miller smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoghte, "al this nis doon but for a wyle,
They wene that no man may hem bigyle,

As whylom to the wold thus spake the mare,
Of al hir art I counte noght a tare"
Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,

And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel,
He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.
This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde
And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde,
This John goth out and fynt his hors away,
And gan to crye "harrow" and "weylaway!
Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes banes,
Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes!
Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn"
This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,
Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.
"What? whilk way is he geen?" he gan to crye.
The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,
She seyde, "allas! your hors goth to the fen

peer,

Alain replied "Well, John, and will you so?

This miller straight went back and no word said,
But did his business and with these clerks played,
Until their corn was fairly, fully ground

She said "Alas! Your horse went to the fen,

With the wild mares, as fast as he could go
A curse light on the hand that tied him so,
And him that better should have knotted rein!"
"Alas!" quoth John, "Alain, for Jesus' pain,
Lay off your sword, and I will mine also,
I am as fleet, God knows, as is a roe,
By God's heart, he shall not escape us both!
Why didn't you put him in the barn? My oath!
Bad luck, by God, Alain, you are a fool!"

rear!
Go whistle, you, and I will watch him here!'
But briefly, till it came to utter night,
They could not, though they put forth all their
might,
That stallion catch he always ran so fast,
Till in a ditch they trapped him at the last
Weary and wet, as beast is in the rain,
Came foolish John and with him came Alain
'Alas," said John "the day that I was born!
Now are we bound toward mockery and scorn.
Our corn is stolen, folk will call us fools,
The warden and the fellows at the schools,
And specially this miller Weladay!'

Or make more room with speech, by some device"
"Now, Simon," said John, ' by Saint Cuthbert's
beard,
You're always merry and have well answered
As I've heard, man shall take one of two things
Such as he finds, or take such as he brings
But specially, I pray you, mine host dear,
Give us some meat and drink and some good cheer,
And we will pay you, truly, to the full
With empty hand no man takes hawk or gull,
Well, here's our silver, ready to be spent'
This miller to the town his daughter sent
For ale and bread, and roasted them a goose,
And tied their horse, that it might not go loose,

With wilde mares, as faste as he may go
Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,
And he that bettre sholde han knit the reyne"
"Allas," quod John, "Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn alswa,
I is ful wight, god waat, as is a raa;
By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe,
Why nadstow pit the capul ih the lathe?
Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonne!"
This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne
To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek John.
And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,
He half a busshel if hir flour hath take,
And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake,
He seyde, "I trowe the clerkes were aferd,
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
For al his art, now lat hem goon hir weye
Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye,
They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun!"
Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With "keep, keep, stand, stand, jossa,
warderere,
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here!"
But shortly, til that it was verray night,
They coude nat, though they do al hir
might,
Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,
Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.
Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,
Comth sely John, and with him comth Aleyn
"Allas," quod John, "the day that I was born!
Now are we drive til hething and til scorn
Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,
And namely the miller, weylaway!"
Thus pleyneth John as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard[1] in his hond.

Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part
Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye conne by argumentes make a place

Cutberd,
Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd
I have herd seyd, man sal taa of twa thinges
Slyk he fyndes, or taa slyk as he bringes
But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere,
Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle
With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;

[1]The horse, any horse.

They soupen and they speke, hem to
  solace,
And drinken ever strong ale atte beste
Aboute midnight wente they to reste
  Wel hath this miller vernisshed his heed,
Ful pale he was for dronken, and nat reed

And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon,

His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,
Men mighte hir routing here two furlong
The wenche routeth eek *par companye*
  Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
He poked John, and seyde, slepestow?
Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now?
Lo whilk a compline is y mel hem alle!
A wilde fyr up on thair bodyes falle!
Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing?
Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending
This lange night ther tydes me na reste,
But yet, na fors al sal be for the beste
For John, seyde he, als ever moot I thryve,
If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve
Som esement has lawe y shapen us
For John ther is a lawe that says thus,
That gif a man in a point be y greved,
That in another he sal be releved
Our corn is stoln shortly it is na nay,
And we han had an il fit al this day
And sin I sal have neen amendement,
Agayn my los I wil have esement
By goddes saule it sal neen other be!
  This John answerde, Alayn avyse thee,
The miller is a perilous man he seyde,
  And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde
He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye
  Aleyn answerde, count him nat a fl
And up he rist and by the wenche he c

And then in his own chamber made a bed
With sheets and with good blankets fairly spread
Not from his bed more than twelve feet or ten

solace

And if he be awakened I'm afraid

This John lay still a quarter hour, or so,
Pitied himself and wept for all his woe.
"Alas," said he, "*this is a wicked jape!*
Now may I say that I am but an ape
Yet has my friend, there, something for his harm;
He has the miller's daughter on his arm
He ventured and his pains are now all fled,
While I lie like a sack of chaff in bed,
And when this jape is told, another day,
I shall be held an ass, a milksop, yea!
I will arise and chance it, by my fay!
'*Unhardy is unhappy,' as they say*"
And up he rose, and softly then he went
To find the cradle for expedient,
And bore it over to his own foot board
Soon after this the wife no longer snored,
But woke and rose and went outside to piss,
And came again and did the cradle miss,
And groped round, here and there, but found it not
"Alas!" thought she, "my way I have forgot
I nearly found myself in the clerks' bed.
Eh, *ben'cite* but that were wrong!" she said
And on, until by cradle she did stand
And groping a bit farther with her hand,
She found the bed, and thought of naught but
good,
Because her baby's cradle by it stood,
And knew not where she was, for it was dark,
But calmly then she crept in by the clerk,
And lay right still and would have gone to sleep
But presently this John the clerk did leap,
And over on this goodwife did he lie
No such gay time she'd known in years gone by
He pricked her hard and deep, like one gone mad
And so a jolly life these two clerks had
Till the third cock began to crow and sing
Alain grew weary in the grey dawning,
For he had laboured hard through all the night,
And said 'Farewell, now, Maudy, sweet delight!
The day is come I may no longer bide,
But evermore, whether I walk or ride,
I am *your own* clerk, so may I have weal"
"Now sweetheart," said she, "go and fare you
well!
But ere you go, there's one thing I must tell
When you go walking homeward past the mill,
Right at the entrance, just the door behind,
You shall a *loaf* of half a bushel find
That was baked up of your own flour, a deal
Of which I helped my father for to steal
And, darling, may God save you now and keep!"
And with that word she almost had to weep
Alain arose and thought "Ere it be dawn,
I will go creep in softly by friend John"
And found the cradle with his hand, anon
"By God!" thought he, "all wrong I must have
gone,
My head is dizzy from my work tonight,
And that's why *I have failed to go aright*
I know well, by this cradle, I am wrong
For here the miller and his wife belong"
And on he went, and *on* the devil's way,

Thus John lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,
And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo'
"Allas!" quod he, "*this is a wikked jape;*
Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;
He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
He auntred him, and has his nedes sped,
And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed,
And when this jape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!
'*Unhardy is unsely,*' thus men sayth"
And up he roos and softely he wente
Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.
Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,
And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse,
And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,
And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.
"Allas!" quod she, "I hadde almost misgoon;
I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed
Ey, *ben'cite!* thanne hadde I foule y-sped"
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoghte noght but
good,
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
And niste wher she was, for it was derk;
But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,
And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.
With-inne a whyl this John the clerk up leep,
And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore,
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.
This joly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.
Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,
For he had swonken al the longe night,
And seyde, "far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde,
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!"
"*Now dere lemman,*" *quod she*, "*go, far*
weel!
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a busshel finde
That was y-maked of thyn owne mele,
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele
And, gode lemman, god thee save and kepe!"
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.
Aleyn up-rist and thoughte, "er that it dawe,
I wol go crepen in by my felawe,
And fond the cradel with his hand anon,
"By god," thoghte he, "al wrang I have
misgon,
Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo,
Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also,"
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,

Un to the bed ther-as the miller lay
He wende have cropen by his felawe John,
And by the miller in he creep anon,
And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak
He seyde, ' thou, John, thou swynes heed, awak
For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game
For by that lord that called is seint Jame,

' hast?
A! false traitour! false clerk! ' quod he,

anon,

Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes
fighte "
This John sterte up as faste as ever he mighte,
And graspeth by the walles to and fro,
To finde a staf, and she sterte up also,
And knew the estres bet than dide this John,
And by the wal a staf she fond anon,
And saugh a litel shimering of a light,
For at an hole in shoon the mone bright,
And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
But sikerly she niste who was who,
But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yë
And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,
She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer
And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle,
And smoot the miller on the pyled skulle,
That doun he gooth and cryde, ' harrow! I dye!"
Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye,
And greythen hem

And hath y lost the grinding of the whete,
And payed for the soper every deel
Of Aleyn and of John, that bette him weel

Unto the bed wherein the miller lay
For by Saint James and as I am a clerk,
Ah traitor false and treacherous clerk! ' cried he,
And on the nose he smote him with his fist
Down ran the bloody stream upon his breast,
And on the floor with nose and mouth a soak,
They wallowed as two pigs do in a poke
And up they came and down they both went,
prone,

But at the last from sleep she started out
Help holy Cross of Bromholm! did she shout,
In *manus tuas* Lord to Thee I call!
Simon awake, the Fiend is on us all!
My heart is broken help I am but dead!
There lies one on my womb one on my head!
Help Simpkin for these treacherous clerks do
fight!

And down he went crying out, Help help I die! '
The two clerks beat him well and let him lie
And clothed themselves and took their horse anon,

His wife is taken, also his daughter sweet;
Thus it befalls a miller who's a cheat
And therefore is this proverb said with truth,
"An evil end to evil man, forsooth "
The cheater shall himself well cheated be
And God, Who sits on high in majesty,
Save all this company, both strong and frail!
Thus have I paid this miller with my tale

His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!
And therefore this proverbe is seyd ful sooth,
"Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth;
A gylour shal him-self bigyled be "
And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,
Save al this companye grete and smale!
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale

HERE IS ENDED THE REEVE'S TALE

THE COOK'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE COOK'S TALE

The cook from London, while the reeve yet spoke,
Patted his back with pleasure at the joke
'Ha, ha!' laughed he by Christ's great suffering,
This miller had a mighty sharp ending
Upon his argument of harbourage!
For well says Solomon, in his language,
'Bring thou not every man into thine house',
For harbouring by night is dangerous
Well ought a man to know the man that he
Has brought into his own security
I pray God give me sorrow and much care
If ever, since I have been Hodge[1] of Ware,
Heard I of miller better brought to mark
A wicked jest was played him in the dark
But God forbid that we should leave off here,
And therefore if you'll lend me now an ear,
From what I know who am but a poor man,
I will relate, as well as ever I can,
A little trick was played in our city."
Our host replied "I grant it readily
Now tell on, Roger, see that it be good,
For many a pasty have you robbed of blood
And many a Jack of Dover[2] have you sold
That has been heated twice and twice grown cold
From many a pilgrim have you had Christ's curse,
For of your parsley they yet fare the worse,
Which they have eaten with your stubble goose,
For in your shop full many a fly is loose
Now tell on, gentle Roger, by your name
But yet, I pray, don't mind if I make game,
A man may tell the truth when it's in play "
"You say the truth," quoth Roger, "by my fay!
But 'true jest, bad jest' as the Fleming saith
And therefore, Harry Bailey, on your faith,
Be you not angry ere we finish here,
If my tale should concern an inn keeper
Nevertheless, I'll tell not that one yet,
But ere we part your jokes will I upset "
And thereon did he laugh, in great good cheer,
And told his tale, as you shall straightway hear

The Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak,
For joye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,
"Ha! ha!" quod he, "for Cristes passioun,
This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun
Upon his argument of herbergage!
Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,
'Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous';
For herberwing by nighte is perilous
Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee.
I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care,
If ever, sith I highte Hogge[1] of Ware,
Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
He hadde a jape of malice in the derk.
But god forbede that we stinten here,
And therfore, if ye vouche-sauf to here
A tale of me, that am a povre man,
I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
A litel jape that fil in our citee "
Our host answerde, and seide, "I graunte it thee,
Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good,
For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
And many a Jakke of Dover[2] hastow sold
That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.
Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
For of thy persly yet they fare the wors,
That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos,
For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name
But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game,
A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley."
"Thou seist ful sooth," quod Roger, "by my fey,
But 'sooth pley, quaad pley,' as the Fleming seith,
And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
Though that my tale be of an hostileer
But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,
But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit "
And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,
And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here.

[1] A nickname for Roger

[2] A slang term for a meat pie from which, not being sold the day it was cooked, the gravy was drawn off.

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE COOK'S TALE

THE COOK'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE COOK'S TALE

With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.
Daunceen he coude so wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour
As is the hyve ful of hony swete;
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.

And gadered him a meinee of his sort
To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.
And ther they setten steven for to mete
To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete.
For in the toune nas ther no prentys,
That fairer coude caste a paire of dys

And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;
But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,

Therfore his maister yaf him acquitance,
And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;

As is a beehive full of honey sweet,
Well for the wench that with him chanced to meet.
At every bridal would he sing and hop,

And they would have appointments for to meet
And play at dice in such, or such, a street.
For in the whole town was no apprentice
Who better knew the way to throw the dice
Than Perkin; and therefore he was right free

"Better take rotten apple from the hoard
Than let it lie to spoil the good ones there."

Who loved the dice and revels and all sport,
And had a wife that kept, for countenance,
A shop, and whored to gain her sustenance

That lovede dys and revel and disport,
And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance
A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance.

OF THIS COOK'S TALE CHAUCER MADE NO MORE

INTRODUCTION TO THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE

THE WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE COMPANY

Our good host saw well that the shining sun
The arc of artificial day[1] had run
A quarter part plus half an hour or more,
And though not deeply expert in such lore,
He reckoned that it was the eighteenth day
Of April, which is harbinger to May,
And saw well that the shadow of each tree
Was, as to length of even quantity
As was the body upright causing it
And therefore by the shade he had the wit
To know that Phoebus, shining there so bright,
Had climbed degrees full forty five in height;
And that, that day, and in that latitude,
It was ten of the clock he did conclude,
And suddenly he put his horse about
"Masters," quoth he, "I warn all of this rout,
A quarter of this present day is gone
Now for the love of God and of Saint John,
Lose no more time, or little as you may,
Masters, the time is wasting night and day,
And steals away from us, what with our sleeping
And with our sloth, when we awake are keeping,
As does the stream, that never turns again,
Descending from the mountain to the plain
And well may Seneca, and many more,
Bewail lost time far more than gold in store.
'For chattels lost may yet recovered be,
But time lost ruins us for aye,' says he
It will not come again, once it has fled
Not any more than will Mag's maidenhead
When she has lost it in her wantonness,
Let's not grow mouldy thus in idleness
"Sir Lawyer," said he, "as you have hope of bliss,
Tell us a tale, as our agreement is,
You have submitted, by your free assent,
To stand, in this case, to my sole judgment,
Acquit yourself, keep promise with the rest,
And you'll have done your duty, at the least "
"Mine host," said he, "by the gods, I consent,
To break a promise is not my intent
A promise is a debt, and by my fay
I keep all mine, I can no better say.
For such law as man gives to other wight,
He should himself submit to it, by right,
Thus says our text, nevertheless, 'tis true
I can relate no useful tale to you,

Our Hoste sey wel that the brighte sonne
Th'ark of his artificial day[1] had ronne
The fourthe part, and half an houre, and more,
And though he were not depe expert in lore,
He wiste it was the eightetethe day
Of April, that is messager to May;
And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree
Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
That was the body erect that caused it
And therfor by the shadwe he took his wit
That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte,
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clokke, he gan conclude,
And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.
"Lordinges," quod he, "I warne yow, al this route,
The fourthe party of this day is goon,
Now, for the love of god and of seint John,
Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day,
And steleth from us, what prively slepinge,
And what thurgh necligence in our wakinge,
As dooth the streem, that turneth never agayn,
Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.
Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre
Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.
'For los of catel may recovered be,
But los of tyme shendeth us,' quod he.
It wol nat come agayn, with-outen drede,
Na more than wol Malkins maydenhede,
Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse,
Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.
"Sir man of lawe," quod he, "so have ye blis,
Tel us a tale anon, as forward is,
Ye been submitted thurgh your free assent
To stonde in this cas at my jugement.
Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,
Than have ye doon your devoir atte leste "
"Hoste," quod he, "*depardieux* ich assente,
To breke forward is not myn entente
Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
Al my biheste, I can no better seyn.
For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,
He sholde him-selven usen it by right,
Thus wol our text, but natheles certeyn
I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,

[1] From sunrise to sunset.

But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
On metres and on ryming craftily,
Hath seyd hem in swich English as he can
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man
And if he have not seyd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath seyd hem in another.
For he hath told of loveres up and doun
Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun
In his Epistelles, that been ful olde
What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,
And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,
Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eke.
Who-so that wol his large volume seke

The dreynte Leander for his Erro,
The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo
Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Ladomëa,
The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals!
O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste,
Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!
But certeinly no word ne wryteth he
Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;
Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy',
Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hir threw up-on the pavement
And therfor he, of ful avysement,
Nolde never wryte in none of his sermouns

In former years, as knows full many a man
For if he has not told them, my dear brother,
In one book, why he's done so in another
For he has told of lovers, up and down,
More than old Ovid mentions, of renown,

Of noble wives and lovers did he speak
And whoso will that weighty volume seek
Called *Legend of Good Women*, need not chide,

Demophoon and Phyllis and her tree,
The plaint of Deianira and Hermione,
Of Ariadne and Hypsipyle,
The barren island standing in the sea,
The drowned Leander and his fair Hero,
The tears of Helen and the bitter woe
Of Briseis and that of Laodomea,
The cruelty of that fair Queen Medea,
Her little children hanging by the neck
When all her love for Jason came to wreck!
O Hypermnestra, Penelope, Alcestis,
Your wifehood does he honour, since it best is!
"But certainly no word has written he

(The *Metamorphoses* show what I mean).
Nevertheless, I do not care a bean
Though I come after him with my plain fare
I'll stick to prose Let him his rhymes prepare"
And thereupon, with sober face and cheer,
He told his tale, as you shall read it here.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE

O hateful harm! condicion of povertee!
With thurst, with cold, with hunger so
confounded!
To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte,
If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,
That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid!
Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence!

O HATEFUL evil! State of Poverty!
With thirst, with cold, with hunger so
confounded!

Thou blamest Christ, and thou say'st it bitterly,
He misdistributes riches temporal;
Thy neighbour dost thou censure, sinfully,
Saying thou hast too little and he hath all.
"My faith," sayest thou, "sometime the reckoning shall
Come on him, when his tail shall burn for greed,
Not having helped the needy in their need."

Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,
He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully,
And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.
"Parfay," seistow, "somtyme he rekne shal,
Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir nede."

Hear now what is the judgment of the wise:
"Better to die than live in indigence";
"Thy very pauper neighbours thee despise."
If thou be poor, farewell thy reverence!
Still of the wise man take this full sentence:
"The days of the afflicted are all sin."
Beware, therefore, that thou come not therein!

Herkne what is the sentence of the wyse:—
"Bet is to dyen than have indigence";
"Thy selve neighebour wol thee despyse";
If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence:—
"Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke";
Be war therfor, er thou come in that prikke!

"If thou be poor, thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy friends will flee from thee, alas!"
O wealthy merchants, full of weal ye be,
O noble, prudent folk in happier case!
Your dice-box doth not tumble out ambsace,[1]
But with *six-cinq*[2] ye throw against your chance;
And so at Christmas, merrily may ye dance!

"If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee,
And alle thy freendes fleen fro thee, alas!"
O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,
O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!
Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes as*,[1]
But with *sis cink*,[2] that renneth for your chaunce;
At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!

Ye search all land and sea for your winnings,
And, as wise folk, ye know well the estate
Of all realms; ye are sires of happenings
And tales of peace and tales of war's debate.
But I were now of tales all desolate
Were't not a merchant, gone this many a year,
Taught me the story which you now shall hear.

Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,
As wyse folk ye knowen al th'estaat
Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges
And tales, bothe of pees and of debat.
I were right now of tales desolat,
Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a yere,
Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal here.

[1]Double-ace

[2]Six and five

THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAW

HERE BEGINNETH THE MAN OF LAW HIS TALE

In Syria once there dwelt a company
Of traders rich, all sober men and true,
That far abroad did send their spicery,
And cloth of gold, and satins rich in hue;
Their wares were all so excellent and new
That everyone was eager to exchange
With them, and sell them divers things and strange.

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye
Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe,
That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;
Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,
That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir ware.

It came to pass, the masters of this sort
Decided that to Rome they all would wend;
Were it for business or for only sport,
No other message would they thither send,
But went themselves to Rome; this is the end.
And there they found an inn and took their rest,
As seemed to their advantage suited best.

Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
Non other message wolde they thider sende,
But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende;
And in swich place, as thoughte hem avantage
For her entente, they take her herbergage.

Sojourned have now these merchants in that town
A certain time, as fell to their pleasance.
And so it happened that the high renown
Of th' emperor's daughter, called the fair Constance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,

Sojourned han thise marchants in that toun
A certein tyme, as fel to hir plesance.
And so bifel, that th'excellent renoun
Of th'emperoures doghter, dame Custance,
Reported was, with every circumstance,

Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich wyse,
Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse

This was the commune vois of every man—
"Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,
To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee,
Nas never swich another as is she,
I prey to god in honour hir sustene,
And wolde she were of al Europe the quene.

In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,
Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;
To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tirannye.
She is mirour of alle curteisye,
Hir herte is verray chambre of holinesse,
Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse"

And al this vois was soth, as god is trewe,
But now to purpos lat us turne agayn,
Thise marchants han doon fraught hir shippes newe,
And, whan they han this blisful mayden seyn,
Hoom to Surryë been they went ful fayn,
And doon her nedes as they han don yore,
And liven in wele, I can sey yow no more

[illegible]

Amonges othere thinges, specially
[illegible]

Paraventure in thilke large book
Which that men clepe the heven, y-writen was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love shulde han his deeth, allas!
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, god woot, who-so coude it rede,
The deeth of every man, withouten drede

In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,
[illegible]

This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
And, shortly of this mater for to pace,

Unto these Syrian merchants, in such wise,
From day to day, as I will now apprise

This was the common voice of every man
[illegible]

And all this voice said truth, as God is true
But to our story let us turn again
These merchants all have freighted ships anew,
And when they'd seen the lovely maid, they fain
Would seek their Syrian homes with all their train,
To do their business as they'd done of yore,
And live in weal, I cannot tell you more

Now so it was, these merchants stood in grace
Of Syria's sultan and so wise was he
That when they came from any foreign place
He would, of his benignant courtesy,
Make them good cheer, inquiring earnestly
For news of sundry realms, to learn, by word,
The wonders that they might have seen and heard

Among some other things, especially
These merchants told him tales of fair Constance,
From such nobility, told of earnestly,
This sultan caught a dream of great pleasance,
And she so figured in his remembrance
That all his wish and all his busy care
Were throughout life, to love that lady fair

Now peradventure, in that mighty book
Which men call heaven, it had come to pass,
[illegible]

And truth it is—the death of every man

In stars, full many a winter over worn,
Was written the death of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, long ere they were born,
The strife at Thebes, and of great Hercules,
Of Samson, of Turnus, of Socrates,
The death to each, but men's wits are so dull
There is no man may read this to the full

This sultan for his privy-council sent,
[illegible]

He did to them declare his whole intent
And said that surely save he might have grace
To gain Constance within a little space
He was but dead, and charged them speedily
To find out for his life some remedy

By divers men then divers things were said
They reasoned and they argued up and down
Full much with subtle logic there they sped
They spoke of spells, of treachery in Rome town
But finally as to an end foreknown
They were agreed that nothing should gainsay
A marriage for there was no other way

Then saw they therein so much difficulty
When reasoning of it (to make all plain,
Because such conflict and diversity
Between the laws of both lands long had lain)
They held No Christian emperor were fain
To have his child wed under our sweet laws,
Given us by Mahomet for God's cause

But he replied Nay rather then than lose
The Lady Constance I'll be christened yea!
I must be hers, I can no other choose
I pray you let be no rebelliousness
Save me my life and do not be careless
In getting her who thus alone may cure
The woe whereof I cannot long endure"

What needs a copious dilation now?
I say By treaties and by embassy
And the pope's mediation high and low,
And all the Church and all the chivalry
That to destruction of Mahometry
And to augmenting Christian faith so dear
They were agreed at last as you shall hear

The sultan and his entire baronage
And all his vassals they must christened be
And he shall have Constance in true marriage
And gold (I know not in what quantity)
For which was found enough security
This being agreed was sworn by either side
Now Constance fair may great God be your guide!

Now would some men expect as I may guess
That I should tell of all the purveyance
The emperor of his great nobleness
Has destined for his daughter fair Constance
But men must known that so great ordinance
May no one tell within a little clause
As was arrayed there for so high a cause

Bishops were named who were with her to wend
Ladies and lords and knights of high renown
And other folk—but I will make an end
Except that it was ordered through the town
That everyone with great devotion shown
Should pray to Christ that He this marriage lead
To happy end and the long voyage speed

He hath to hem declared his entente,
And seyde hem certein, "but he mighte have grace
To han Custance with-inne a litel space,
He nas but deed ', and charged hem, in hye,
To shapen for his lyf som remedye.

Diverse men diverse thinges seyden,
They argumenten, casten up and doun
Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,
They speken of magik and abusioun,
But finally, as in conclusioun,
They can not seen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other wey, save mariage.

Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn,
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe "that no cristen prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete
That us were taught by Mahoun our prophete."

And he answerde, "rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristned douteles,
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees,
Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recchelees
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure,
For in this wo I may not longe endure."

What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrye,
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here;

How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,
And her-to founden suffisant seurtee;
This same acord was sworn on eyther syde;
Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee gyde!

Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance
That th' emperour, of his grete noblesse,
Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.

Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to wende,
Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,
And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende;
And notifyed is thurgh-out the toun
That every wight, with gret devocioun,
Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hir departinge,
I sey the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger taryinge,
But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some,
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende,
For wel she seeth ther is non other ende

The day is come at last for leave taking
I say the woeful fatal day is come

For well she saw there was no other end

Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,
That shal be sent to strange nacioun
Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,

Alas! What wonder is it that she wept?
She shall be sent to a strange country far
From friends that her so tenderly have kept
And bound to one her joy to make or mar
Whom she knows not nor what his people are
Husbands are all good and have been of yore
That know their wives but I dare say no more.

'Fader, she sayde,' thy wrecched child
Custance
Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe,
And ye my moder, my soverayn plesance
Over alle thing out taken Crist on lofte,
Custance your child hir recomandeth ofte
Un to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,
Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë

Father she said 'your wretched child
Constance,

Constance your child would be [illegible] oft
Within your prayers for I to Syria go
Nor shall I ever see you more ah no!

Allas! un to the Barbre nacioun
I moste anon, sin that it is your wille,
But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille
I wrecche womman no fors though I spille
Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,
And to ben under mannes governance

Unto the land of Barbary my fate

I think was heard no weeping for pity
As in the chamber at her leave taking
Yet go she must whether she weep or sing

O firste moeving cruel firmament
With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
And hurlest al *from Est til Occident*,
That naturelly wolde holde another way,
Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
At the beginning of this fiers viage,
That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage

O

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helples falle allas!
Out of his angle in to the derkest hous
O Mars O Atazir[1] as in this cas!
O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!
Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow
weyved

Unfortunate ascendant tortuous
Of which the lord has helpless fall n alas
Out of his angle to the darkest house!
O Mars! O Atazir in present case![1]
O feeble Moon unhappy is thy pace!
Thou rt in conjunction where thou rt not received
And where thou should st go thou hast not
achieved

Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun?
Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?

Imprudent emperor of Rome alas!
Was no philosopher in all thy town?
Is one time like another in such case?

[1]The influence of a star on other stars or on men.

Indeed, can there be no election shown,
Especially to folk of high renown,
And when their dates of birth may all men know?
Alas! We are too ignorant or too slow.

To ship is brought this fair and woeful maid,
Full decorously, with every circumstance.
"Now Jesus Christ be with you all," she said,
And there's no more, save "Farewell, fair Constance!"
She strove to keep a *cheerful* countenance,
And forth I let her sail in this manner,
And turn again to matters far from her.

The mother of the sultan, well of vices,
Has heard the news of her son's full intent,
How he will leave the ancient sacrifices;
And she at once for her own council sent;
And so they came to learn what thing she meant.
And when they were assembled, each compeer,
She took her seat and spoke as you shall hear.

"My lords," said she, "you know well, every man,
My son intends to forgo and forget
The holy precepts of our Alkoran,
Given by God's own prophet, Mahomet.
But I will make one vow to great God yet:
The life shall rather *from* my body start
Than Islam's laws out of my faithful heart!

"*What should we get from* taking this new creed
But thralldom for our bodies and penance?
And afterward, be drawn to Hell, indeed,
For thus denying our faith's inheritance?
But, lords, if you will give your sustenance,
And join me for the wisdom I've in store,
I swear to save us all for evermore."

They swore and they assented, every man,
To live by her and die, and by her stand,
And each of them, in what best wise he can,
Shall gather friends and followers into band;
And she shall take the enterprise in hand,
The form of which I soon will you apprise,
And to them all she spoke, then, in this wise.

"*We will first feign the Christian faith to take,*
Cold water will not harm us from the rite;
And I will such a feast and revel make
As will, I trust, to lull be requisite.
For though his wife be christened ever so white,
She shall have need to wash away the red,
Though a full font of water be there sped."

O sultana, *root of iniquity!*
Virago, you Semiramis second!
O serpent hid in femininity,
Just as the Serpent deep in Hell is bound!
O pseudo woman, all that may confound
Virtue and innocence, through your malice,
Is bred in you, the nest of every vice!

Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
Nat whan a rote is of a burthe y-knowe?
Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe.

To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde
Solempnely, with every circumstance.
"Now Jesu Crist be with yow alle," she sayde,
Ther nis namore but "farewell faire Custance!"
She peyneth hir to make good countenance,
And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,
And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,
Espyed hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifyces,
And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.
And when assembled was this folk in-fere,
She sette hir doun, and sayde as ye shal here.

"Lordes," quod she, "ye knowen everichon,
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by goddes message Makomete.
But oon avow to grete god I hete,
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!

What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance?
And afterward in helle to be drawe
For we reneyed Mahoun our creance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shal make us sauf for evermore?"

They sworen and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde;
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;
And she hath this empryse y-take on honde,
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse.

"We shul *first feyne us cristendom to take,*
Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte,
And I shal swich a feste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so whyte,
She shal have nede to wasshe awey the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede."

O *sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,*
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under femininitee,
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!

O Satan, envious sin thilke day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage.
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the whyle!
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle

This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,
Leet prively hir conseil goon hir way
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day,
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,
Repenting hir she hethen was so longe,

Biseching him to doon hir that honour,
That she moste han the cristen men to feste,
'To plesen hem I wol do my labour"
The sowdan seith, "I wol don at your heste"
And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.
So glad he was, he niste what to seye,
She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye

O Satan, envious since that same day
When thou wert banished from our heritage,
Well know st thou unto woman thine old way!
Thou made'st Eve bring us into long bondage
Thou wilt destroy this Christian marriage
Thine instrument—ah welaway the while!—
Make'st thou of woman when thou wilt beguile!

Now this sultana whom I blame and harry,
Let, secretly, her council go their way
Why should I longer in my story tarry?
She *rode unto the sultan*, on a day,
And told him she d renounce her old faith yea,
Be christened at priests hands with all the throng
Repentant she'd been heathen for so long

Beseeching him to do her the honour
To let her have the Christian men to feast
'To entertain them will be my labour"
The sultan said I ll be at your behest"
And kneeling thanked her for that fair request,
So glad he was he knew not what to say,
She kissed her son, and homeward went her way

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE SECOND PART

Arryved ben this Cristen folk to londe,
In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,
And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde,
First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,
And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of doute,
And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the quene,
The honour of his regne to sustene

Gret was the prees, and riche was th'array
Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere,
The moder of the sowdan, riche and gay,
Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere
As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,
And to the nexte citee ther bisyde
A softe pas solempnely they ryde

Noght trowe I the triumphe of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swich a bost,
Was royaller, ne more curious
Than was th'assemblee of this blisful host.
But this scorpioun, this wikked gost,
The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe,
Caste under this ful mortally to stinge

The sowdan comth him-self sone after this
So royally, that wonder is to telle,
And welcometh hir with alle joye and blis
And thus in merthe and joye I lete hem dwelle.
The fruyt of this matere is that I telle
Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste
That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste

The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde,
And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.

Arrived now are these Christian folk at land,
In Syria, with a great stately rout,
And hastily this sultan gave command,
First to his mother and all the realm about,
Saying his wife was come beyond a doubt,
And prayed her that she ride to meet the queen,
That all due honour might be shown and seen

Great was the crush and rich was the array
Of Syrians and Romans, meeting here,
The mother of the sultan rich and gay,
Received her open armed, with smiling cheer,
As any mother might a daughter dear,
And to the nearest city, with the bride,
At gentle pace, right festively they ride

I think the triumph of great Julius,
Whereof old Lucan make so long a boast,
Was not more royal nor more curious
Than was the assembling of this happy host
But this same Scorpion this wicked ghost—
The old sultana for all her flattering
Chose in that sign full mortally to sting

The sultan *came* himself soon after this,
So regally 'twere wonderful to tell,
And welcomed her into all joy and bliss
And thus in such delight I let them dwell.
The fruit of all is what I now shall tell
When came the time, *men* thought it for the best
Their revels cease, and got them home to rest

The time came when this old sultana there
Has ordered up the feast of which I told,
Whereto *the Christian folk* did them prepare,
The company together, young and old

There men might feast and royalty behold,
With dainties more than I can e'en surmise,
But all too dear they've bought it, ere they rise

O sudden woe! that ever will succeed

Upon your most glad day, bear then in mind
The unknown harm and woe that come behind

For but to tell you briefly, in one word—
The sultan and the Christians, every one,
Were all hewed down and thrust through at the
board,

For she herself would all the nation lead

There was no Syrian that had been converted,
Being of the sultan's council resolute
But was struck down, ere from the board he'd
started
And Constance have they taken now, hot foot,
And on a ship, of rudder destitute
They her have placed, bidding her learn to sail
From Syria to Italy—or fail

A certain treasure that she'd brought they add,

O Constance mine, full of benignity,
O emperor's young daughter, from afar
He that is Lord of fortune be your star!

the spear,

For years and days drifted this maiden pure,
Through all *the seas of Greece* and to the strait

Her vessel where it shall some day arrive

Here may men feste and royaltee biholde,
And deyntees mo than *I can yow devyse,*
But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse.

O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour

For shortly for to tellen at o word,
The sowdan and the Cristen *everichone*
Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the
bord,
But it were only dame Custance allone.
This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al to-hewe er he
asterted
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot,
And *in a* shippe al sterelees, god woot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle
Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle

A certein tresor that she thider ladde,

She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she,
"O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lambes *blood full of pitee,*
That wesh the world *fro the olde* inquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of heven with his woundes newe,
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the
spere,
Flemer of feendes out of him and here
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf t'amenden."

Yeres and dayes *fleet* this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure,
On *many* a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wol hir dryve
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.

Men mighten asken why she was not slayn?
Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?
And I answere to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leoun frete er he asterte?
No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.

God willed to show this wondrous miracle
Through her, that we should see His mighty works;
And Christ Who every evil can dispel
By certain means does oft, as know all clerks,
Do that whereof the end in darkness lurks
For man's poor wit, which of its ignorance
Cannot conceive His careful purveyance

Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,
Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see?
Who kepte Jonas in the fisshes mawe
Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drenchinge,
With drye feet thurgh-out the see passinge.

Now, since she was not slain at feast we saw,

Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,
That power han t'anoyen land and see,
"Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?"
Sothly, the comaundour of that was he,
That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
As wel whan [that] she wook as whan she slepte.

Who bade the four great spirits of tempest,

Wher mighte this womman mete and drinke have?
Three yeer and more how lasteth hir vitaille?

She dryveth forth in-to our occean
Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste,
And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde,
The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde.

The constable of the castel doun is fare

and to delivere of wo that she was inne

A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,
But algates ther-by was she understonde,
The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
This woful womman broghte he to the londe;
She kneleth doun, and thanketh goddes
sonde.

A kind of bastard Latin did she speak,

But who or what she was she would not say,
For threat or promise, though she died that day.

She was so diligent to toil in sooth
To serve and please all folk within that place,
That all loved her who looked upon her face

And prayed so oft with many a tearful prayer,
That Jesus has converted through His grace,
Dame Hermengild the lady of that place

In all that land no Christian dared speak out
All Christians having fled from the country,
For pagan men had conquered all about

Yet ne'er were Christian Britons so exiled
But some of them assembled privately
To honour Christ and heathen folk beguiled,
And near the castle dwelt of such men three
But one of them was blind and could not see,
Save with the inner optics of his mind
Wherewith all men see after they go blind

Bright was the sun upon that summer's day
When went the warden and his wife also

'In name of Christ!' this blind old Briton cried
'Dame Hermengild give me my sight again'

The warden was confounded by that sight
And asked 'What mean these words and this affair?'
Constance replied 'Sir, it is Jesus' might
That helps all poor folk from the foul Fiend's snare'
And so far did she our sweet faith declare
That she the constable before 'twas eve
Converted and in Christ made him believe

This constable, though not lord of that place

But what she was, she wolde no man seye,
For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye

She seyde, she was so mased in the see
That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe,
The constable hath of hir so greet pitee,
And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe,
She was so diligent, with-outen slouthe,
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That alle hir loven that loken on hir face

This constable and dame Hermengild his wyf
Were payens, and that contree every-where,
But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir lyf,
And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
Til Jesu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place.

In al that lond no Cristen durste route,
Alle Cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the North, by land and see,
To Walis fled the Cristianitee
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle,
Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle

But yet nere Cristen Britons so exyled
That ther nere somme that in hir privetee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled,
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see
But it were with thilke yën of his minde,
With whiche men seen, after that they ben blinde.

Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,
For which the constable and his wyf also
And Custance han y take the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro,
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette
Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette

"In name of Crist," cryde this blinde Britoun
"Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn."
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hir for Jesu Cristes love han slayn,
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche

The constable wex abasshed of that sight,
And seyde, "what amounteth al this fare?"
Custance answerde, "sire, it is Cristes might,
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare"
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bileve

This constable was no-thing lord of this place

Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kept it strongly, many wintres space,
Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond,
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel here,
But turne I wol agayn to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugh of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun,
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verraily him thoughte he shulde spille
But he of hir mighte ones have his wille.

He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no sinne, by no weye,
And, for despyt, he compassed in his thoght
To maken hir on shameful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was aweye,
And prively, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte.

Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,
[illegible]

And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!

[illegible]

For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.

To king Alla was told al this meschance,
And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wyse
That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,
Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in misaventure

For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
So stant this innocent bifore the king,
This false knight that hath this tresoun wroght
Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing
But nathelees, ther was greet moorning
Among the peple, and seyn, "they can not gesse
That she hat doon so greet a wikkednesse.

For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermengild right as her lyf."
Of this bar witnesse everich in that hous
Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.
This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf

Where he'd found Constance, wrecked upon the sand,
[illegible]

Satan, that ever waits, men to beguile,
Saw now, in Constance, all perfection grown,
[illegible]

[illegible]

And cut the throat of Hermengild, and so
Laid the hot reeking knife by fair Constance,
And went his way—where God give him mischance!

Soon after came the warden home again,
And with him Alla, king of all that land,
And saw his wife so pitilessly slain,
[illegible]

King Alla was apprised of this sad chance,
And told the time and where, and in what wise
Was found in a wrecked ship the fair Constance,
[illegible]

"For we have seen her always virtuous,
And loving Hermengild as she loved life."
To this bore witness each one in that house,
Save he that slew the victim with his knife.
The gentle king suspected motive rife

In that man's heart, and thought he would inquire
Deeper therein, the truth to learn entire.

Alas, Constance! You have no champion,
And since you cannot fight, it's welaway!
But He Who died for us the cross upon
And Satan bound (who lies yet where he lay),
So be your doughty Champion this day!
For, except Christ a miracle make known,
You shall be slain, though guiltless, and right soon.

She dropped upon her knees and thus she prayed:
"Immortal God, Who saved the fair Susanna
From lying blame, and Thou, O gracious Maid
(Mary, I mean, the daughter of Saint Anna),
Before whose Child the angels sing hosanna,
If I be guiltless of this felony,
My succour be, for otherwise I die!"

Have you not sometimes seen a pallid face
Among the crowd, of one that's being led
Toward his death—one who had got no grace?
And such a pallor on his face was spread
All men must mark it, full of horrid dread,
Among the other faces in the rout:
So stood fair Constance there and looked about.

O queens that live in all prosperity,
Duchesses, and you ladies every one,
Have pity now on her adversity!
An emperor's young daughter stands alone;
She has no one to whom to make her moan.
O royal blood that stands there in such dread,
Far are your friends away in your great need!

This King Alla has such compassion shown
(Since gentle heart is full of all pity)
That from his two eyes ran the tears right down.
"Now hastily go fetch a book," quoth he,
"And if this knight will swear that it was she
Who slew the woman, then will we make clear
The judge we shall appoint the case to hear."

A book of Gospels writ in British tongue
Was brought, and *on this Book he swore anon*
Her guilt; but then the people all among
A clenched hand *smote him on the shoulder bone*,
And down he fell as stunned as by a stone,
And both his eyes burst forth out of his face
In sight of everybody in that place.

A voice was heard by all that audience,
Saying: "You have here slandered the guiltless
Daughter of Holy Church in high Presence;
Thus have you done, and further I'll not press."
Whereat were all the folk aghast, no less;
As men amazed they stand there every one,
For dread of vengeance, save Constance alone.

Great was the fear *and, too, the repentance*
Of those that held a wrong suspicion there
Against this simple innocent Constance;

Of this witnesse, and thoghte he wolde enquere
Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere.

Allas! Custance! thou hast no champioun,
Ne fighte canstow nought, so weylawey!
But he, that starf for our redempcioun
And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay)
So be thy stronge champioun this day!
For, but if Crist open miracle kythe,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.

She sette her doun on knees, and thus she sayde,
"Immortal god, that savedest Susanne
Fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde,
Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,
Bifore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,
If I be giltlees of this felonye,
My socour be, for elles I shal dye!"

Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face,
Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace,
And swich a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,
Amonges alle the faces in that route:
So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;
An emperoures doghter stant allone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,
Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede!

This Alla king hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee,
That from his yën ran the water doun.
"Now hastily do fecche a book," quod he,
"And if this knight wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal ben our justyse."

A Britoun book, writen with Evangyles,
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
She gilty was, and in the mene whyles
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon,
And bothe his yën broste out of his face
In sighte of every body in that place.

A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, "thou hast desclaundred giltelees
The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence;
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees."
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees,
As mased folk they stoden everichone,
For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.

Greet was the drede and eek the repentance
Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;

And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!

And by this miracle so wondrous fair,
And by her mediation and her prayer,
The king, with many another in that place,
Was there converted, *thanks to Christ His grace!*

This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe

And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a quene

Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the royaltee
At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to seye,
They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye

Neither with chaff nor straw it pleases me
To make a long tale, here, but with the corn.
Why should I tell of all the royalty
At that wedding, or who went first, well born,
Or who blew out a trumpet or a horn?
The fruit of every tale is but to say,
They eat and drink and dance and sing and play.

They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right,
For, thogh that wyves been ful holy thinges,

On hir he gat a knave-child anoon,
And to a bishop and his constable eke

The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;
Mauricius at the font-stoon they him calle,
This constable dooth forth come a messager,

The time was come, a baby boy she bore;

He took the letter and went on his way

This messager, to doon his avantage,
Un to the kinges moder rydeth swythe,
And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,
"Madame," quod he, "ye may be glad and blythe,
And thanke god an hundred thousand sythe;
My lady quene hath child, with-outen doute,
To joye and blisse of al this regne aboute

To God a hundred thousand thanks proceed
The queen has borne a child, beyond all doubt,
To joy and bliss of all this land about.

"Lo, here are letters sealed that say this thing,
Which I must bear with all the speed I may.
[illegible]

This messenger drank deep of ale and wine,
And stolen were his letters, stealthily,
Out of his box, while slept he like a swine,
And counterfeited was, right cleverly,
Another letter, wrought full sinfully,
Unto the king, of this event so near,
All from the constable, as you shall hear

The letter said, "the queen delivered was
Of such a fiendish, horrible creature,
That in the castle none so hardy as
Durst, for a lengthy time there to endure
The mother was an elf or fairy, sure,
Come there by chance of charm, or sorcery,
And all good men hated her company"

Sad was the king when this letter he'd seen,
But to no man he told his sorrows sore,
But with his own hand he wrote back again
"Welcome what's sent from Christ, for evermore,
To me, who now am learned in His lore
Lord welcome be Thy wish though hidden
still,
My own desire is but to do Thy will

"Guard well this child, though foul it be or fair,
[illegible]

To the same *messenger* 'twas taken soon,
And forth he went, there's no more to be done.

O [illegible]
Where drunkenness can reign, in any rout,
There is no counsel kept, beyond a doubt

O Donegild, there is no English mine
Fit for your malice and your tyranny!
Therefore you to the Fiend I do resign,
Let him go write of your foul treachery!
Fie, mannish women! Nay, by God, I lie!
Fie, *fiendish spirit*, for I dare well tell,
Though you walk here, your spirit is in Hell!

[illegible]

[illegible]
But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,
Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste."

This messager drank sadly ale and wyn,
And stolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn:
And countrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,
Un-to the king direct of this matere
Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.

The lettre spak, "the queen delivered was
Of so horrible a feendly creature,
That in the castel noon so hardy was
That any whyle dorste ther endure.
The moder was an elf, by aventure
Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye,
And every wight hateth hir companye"

Wo was this king whan he this lettre had seyn,
But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes sore,
But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,
"Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore
To me, that am now lerned in his lore,
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy
plesaunce,
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce!

Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-cominge;
Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir
More agreable than this to my lykinge."
This lettre he seleth, prively wepinge,
Which to the messager was take sone,
And forth he gooth, ther is na more to done.

O messager, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
Thy mind is lorn, thou janglest as a jay,
Thy face is turned in a newe array!
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hid, with-outen doute.

O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne
Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
And therfor to the feend I thee resigne,
Let him endyten of thy traitorye!
Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,
Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,
Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle!

This messager comth fro the king agayn,
And at the kinges modres court he lighte,
And she was of this messager ful fayn,
And plesed him in al that ever she mighte.
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.

He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gyse
Al night, un til the sonne gan aryse

Eft were his lettres stolen everichon
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse,
"The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh juyse,
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his regne for t'abyde
Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde,

But in the same ship as he hir fond,
Hir and hir yonge sonne, and al hir gere,
He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,
And charge hir that she never eft come there"
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have fere
And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,
When Donegild caste al this ordinance!

This messager on morwe, whan he wook,
Un to the castel halt the nexte wey,
And to the constable he the letre took,
And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
Ful ofte he seyde "allas!" and "weylawey!"
"Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world
  endure?
So ful of sinne is many a creature!

O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,

On shames deeth, ther is noon other weye!"

Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place,
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sente,
And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente
But natheles she taketh in good entente
The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the stronde,
She seyde, "lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!

He that me kepte fro the false blame
Whyl I was on the londe amonges yow,
He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame
In salte see, al-thogh I see nat how
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now
In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
That is to me my seyl and eek my stere"

Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,

"Moder," quod she, "and mayde bright, Marye,
Sooth is that thurgh wommannes eggement

He slept and snored and mumbled, drunken wise,
All night, until the sun began to rise

"But in the ship wherein she came to strand
She and her infant son and all her gear
Shall be embarked and pushed out from the land,
And charge her that she never again come here"
O Constance mine, well might your spirit fear,
And, sleeping, in your dream have great grievance
When Donegild arranged this ordinance

This messenger, the morrow, when he woke,
Unto the castle held the nearest way,
And to the constable the letter took
And when he'd read and learned what it did say,
Often he cried 'Alas!' and 'Welaway!
Lord Christ,' quoth he, 'how may this world en-
  dure?
So full of sin is many a bad creature

Wept both the young and old of all that place

As strong as ever He was, so is He now
In Him I trust and in His Mother dear,
He is my sail, the star by which I steer."

Again her arm about and lulled him fast
Asleep, and then to Heaven her eyes up cast

'Mother," she said, 'O Thou bright Maid, Mary,
True is it that through woman's incitement

Mankind was banished and is doomed to d -
For which Thy Son upon the cross was rent,
Thy blessed eyes saw all of His torment
Wherefore there s no compari on between
Thy woe and any woe of man though keen

Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
For which thy child was on a croys y rent,
Thy blisful yen sawe al his torment,
Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene
Thy wo and any wo man may sustene

"Thou sawest them slay Thy Son before Thine eyes,
And yet lives now my little child I say!

Pity my chil ! Who of Thy gentleness
Hast pity on mankind in all distress!

Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn yën,
And yet now liveth my litel child, parfay!
Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryën,
Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,
Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Rewest on every rewful in distresse!

O litel child, allas! what is thy gilt,
That never wroughtest sinne as yet, pardee,
Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?

Therewith she gazed long backward at the land
And said Farewell my husban I merciless!
And up she rose and walke I right d v n the strand
To var I the sh p t llowed her all the press
And ever she prayed her chil I to cry the less
And took her leave and with a high intent
She crossed herself and aboard ship she went

Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,
And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhelees!'
And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
Toward the ship, hir folweth al the prees,
And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his pees,
And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente
She blesseth hir; and in to ship she wente

Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hir, ful longe space,
And other necessaries that sholde nede
She hadde y nogh, heried be goddes grace!
For wind and weder almighty god purchace,
And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre seye,
But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE THIRD PART

As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,
And sheweth the king his seel and [eek] his lettre,

And seyde, "lord, as ye comaunded me
Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein"
This messager tormented was til he
Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,
Fro night to night, in what place he had leyn

And thus by dint of subtle questioning
'Twas reasoned out from whom this harm did spring

And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe,
Ymagined was by whom this harm gan springe

The hand was known now, that the letter wrote,
And all the venom of this cursed deed
But in what wise I certainly know not
The effect is this that Alla for her meed
His mother slew, as men may plainly read

The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot,
And al the venym of this cursed dede,
But in what wyse, certeinly I noot
Th'effect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
His moder slow, that men may pleinly rede,

For that she traitour was to hir ligeaunce
Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschaunce

She being false to her sworn allegiance,
And thus old Donegild ended with mischance

The sorwe that thus Alla, noght and day,
Maketh for his wyf and for his child also,
Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
But now wol I un to Custance go,
That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes sonde,
Er that hir ship approched un-to londe

The sorrow that this Alla, night and day,
Felt for his wife, and for his child also,
There is no human tongue on earth to say
But now will I back to fair Constance go,
Who drifted on the seas, in pain and woe,
Five years and more, as was Lord Christ's command
Before her ship approached to any land

Under an hethen castel, atte laste,
Of which the name in my text noght I finde,
Custance and eek hir child the see up-caste
Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,
Have on Custance and on hir child som minde,
That fallen is in hethen land eft-sone,
In point to spille, as I shal telle yow sone

Under a heathen castle, at the last,

Doun from the castel comth ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship and on Custance
But shortly, from the castel, on a night,
The lordes styward—god yeve him meschaunce!—
A theef, that had reneyed our creaunce,
Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde
Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde

Down from the castle came full many a wight
To stare upon the ship and on Constance
But briefly, from the castle, on a night,

Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon,
Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously,

And in the sea was drowned by God's vengeance;
And thus has Christ unsullied kept Constance

AUTHOR

Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde
That noght for werk som-tyme, but for th'entente
To doon this sinne, ben outher sleyn or shente!

Is bitterness, how many may we find
That not for actions but for mere intent
To do this sin, to shame or death are sent

Who yaf Judith corage or hardinesse
To sleen him, Olofernus, in his tente,
And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse

Who gave to Judith courage all reckless
To slay him Holofernes, in his tent,

Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth
Of Jubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,

Forth went her ship and through the narrow mouth
Of Ceuta and Gibraltar, on its way,

Sometimes to west, and sometimes north or south

Som tyme West, som tyme North and South,
And som tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!)
Hath shapen, thurgh hir endelees goodnesse,
To make an ende of al hir hevinesse

But let us leave this Constance now and turn
To speak of that same Roman emperor
Who does from Syria by letters learn
The slaughter of Christians and the dishonour
Done to his daughter by a vile traitor—
I mean that old sultana years ago
Who at the feast, slew all men high and low

Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,
And speke we of the Romain Emperour,
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe
The slaughtre of Cristen folk, and dishonour
Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,
I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse,
That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse

For which this emperor did send anon

mischance
Through many a day but briefly to make end,
Homeward to Rome at last the victors wend

For which this emperour hath sent anoon
His senatour, with royal ordinance,
And othere lordes, got wot, many oon,
On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance
They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance
Ful many a day, but shortly, thus is the ende,
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senator returned with victory
To Rome again sailing right royally
And spoke the ship (so goes the old story)
In which our Constance sat so piteously
Nothing he knew of who she was, or why
She was in such a plight nor would she say
Aught of herself though she might die that day

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally,
And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,
In which Custance sit ful pitously
No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swich array, ne she nil seye
Of hir estaat, althogh she sholde deye

He took her into Rome and to his wife
Gave her in charge and her young son also
And in his house she lived awhile her life
Thus can Our Lady bring from deepest woe
Most woeful Constance aye and more we know
And for a long time dwelt she in that place
Engaged in God's good works such was her grace.

He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also,
And with the senatour she ladde her lyf
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo
And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,
In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace

The senator's good wife her own aunt was
Yet for all that she knew her never the more
I will no longer tarry in this case
But to King Alla whom we left of yore
Weeping for his lost wife and sighing sore,
I will return and I will leave Constance
Under the senator's roof and governance

The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hir never the more,
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore,
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance

King Alla who had had his mother slain
Upon a day fell to such repentance
That but to tell it briefly and be plain

King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn,
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain,
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance,
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In heigh and low, and Jesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte

The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born,
How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn,
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood him ageyn, and many of his linage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence
As to don any king a reverence.

Greet chere dooth this noble senatour
To king Alla, and he to him also,
Everich of hem doth other greet honour,
And so bifel that, in a day or two,
This senatour is to king Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his companye

Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,
This senatour hath lad this child to feste;
I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leste
But soth is this, that, at his modres heste,
Biforn Alla, during the metes space,
The child stood, loking in the kinges face.

This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
"Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?"
"I noot," quod he, "by god, and by seint John!
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non
That I of woot"—but shortly, in a stounde,
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.

"But god wot," quod this senatour also,
"So vertuous a livere in my lyf,
Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo
Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of wyf,
I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf
Thurgh-out her breste, than been a womman
wikke,
Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that prikke."

And spedde him fro the table that he mighte.

'Parfay," thoghte he, "fantome is in myn heed!
I oghte deme, of skilful jugement,
That in the salte see my wyf is deed"
And afterward he made his argument—
"What woot I, if that Crist have hider y-sent
My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente
To my contree fro thennes that she wente?"

Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte stonde

When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir grette,
And weep, that it was routhe for to see.
For at the firste look he on hir sette
He knew wel verraily that it was she
And she for sorwe as domb stant as a tree,

To feast, and briefly, if I may not lie,
Constance' young son went in his company

Some men would say, 'twas instance of Constance
That sent him with the senator to feast,
I cannot tell you every circumstance,
Be it as may be, he was there, at least
But truth is that, at his mother's behest,
Before the king, during the banquet's space,
The child stood, looking in King Alla's face.

This child aroused within the king great wonder,
And to the senator he said, anon
'Whose is the fair child that is standing yonder?'
"I know not," quoth he, "by God and Saint John!
A mother he has, but father has he none
That I know of"—and briefly, at a bound,
He told King Alla how this child was found

"But God knows," said this senator, as well,
"So virtuous a liver, in my life
I never saw, as she is, nor heard tell
Of earthly woman maiden, no nor wife
I dare say, she would rather have a knife
Thrust through her breast than play a female
trick,
There is no man could bring her to the prick"

Now this boy was as like unto Constance
As it was possible for one to be

'In faith," thought he, "a phantom's in my head!

My wife by sea, as surely as she went
To my own land, the which was evident?"

And after noon, home with the senator

And she for grief stood dumb as ever tree,

So was her heart shut up in her distress
When she remembered his unkindliness.

Twice did she swoon away there, in his sight;
He wept and he protested piteously
"Now God," quoth he, "and all His angels bright
So truly on my spirit have mercy
As of your ills all innocent am I,
As is Maurice my son so like your face,
Or may the foul fiend take me from this place!"

Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain
Before their woeful hearts could find surcease,
Great was the pity to hear them complain,
Whereof their sorrows surely did increase
I pray you all my labour to release,
I cannot tell their grief until tomorrow,
I am so weary, speaking long of sorrow

But, truth being known and all doubt now dismissed,
And Alla proven guiltless of her woe,

Then prayed she of her husband, all meekly,
As for her pain a splendid anodyne,

Some men would say, it was the child Maurice
Did bear this message to the emperor,
But, as I guess, King Alla was too nice
In etiquette to one of such honour
As he that was of Christendom the flower,
To send a child, and it is best to deem
He went himself, and so it well may seem

This emperor has granted graciously,

Made ready for the feast in every wise
As far as his experience could devise

The morrow came, and Alla rose to dress,
And, too, his wife, the emperor to meet,
And forth they rode in joy and happiness
And when she saw her father in the street,
She lighted down, and falling at his feet,
"Father," quoth she, "your young child, your Constance,
Is now gone clean out of your remembrance

"I am your daughter Constance," then said she,
"That once you sent to Syria 'Tis I

So was hir herte shet in hir distresse
Whan she remembred his unkindenesse.

Twyes she swowned in his owne sighte,
He weep, and him excuseth pitously—
"Now god," quod he, "and alle his halwes brighte
So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
That of your harm as giltelees am I
As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;
Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!"

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne
Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse,
Greet was the pitee for to here hem pleyne,
Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encresse.
I prey yow al my labour to relesse,
I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe,
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But fynally, when that the sooth is wist
That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,
I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,
And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two
That, save the joye that lasteth evermo,
Ther is non lyk, that any creature
Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world may dure.

Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,
In relief of hir longe pitous pyne,
That he wold preye hir fader specially
That, of his magestee, he wolde enclyne
To vouche-sauf som day with him to dyne;
She preyde him eek, he sholde by no weye
Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye.

Som men wold seyn, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message un-to this emperour,
But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
To him, that was of so sovereyn honour
As he that is of Cristen folk the flour,
Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
He wente him-self, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to diner, as he him bisoghte,
And wel rede I, he loked bisily
Up-on this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wyse
As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.

The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse,
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete,
And forth they ryde in joye and in gladnesse
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun, and falleth him to fete
"Fader," quod she, "your yonge child Custance
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance

I am your doghter Cůstancě," quod she,
"That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye.

It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye.
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kindenesse"

Who can the pitous joye tellen al
Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus y mette?
But of my tale make an ende I shal,
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette
This glade folk to diner they hem sette;
In joye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle.

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lived Cristenly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially
In olde Romayn gestes may men finde
Maurices lyf, I bere it noght in minde.

This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey,
With his Custance, his holy wyf so swete,
To Engelond been they come the righte wey,
Wher-as they live in joye and in quiete
But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
Joye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde,
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde

Who lived ever in swich delyt o day
That him ne moeved outher conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence?
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel whyl in joye or in plesance
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance

For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low his rente,
When passed was a yeer, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he hente,
For whom Custance hath ful gret hevinesse
Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
And dame Custance, fynally to seye,
Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir weye

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and sounde
Now is she scaped al hir aventure,
And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,
Doun on hir knees falleth she to grounde,
Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,
She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe

In vertu and in holy almes-dede
They liven alle, and never a-sonder wende,
Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede
And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende
Now Jesu Crist, that of his might may sende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place! Amen.

It is I father, who, on the salt sea,
Was sent, alone to drift and doomed to die
But now, good father, mercy must I cry
Send me no more to heathendom, godless,
But thank my lord, here, for his kindliness."

But all the tender joy, who'll tell it all
That was between the three who thus are met?
But of my tale now, make an end I shall,
The day goes fast, I will no longer fret
These happy folk at dinner are all set
And there in joy and bliss, I let them dwell,
Happier a thousand fold than I can tell

This child Maurice was, since then emperor
Made by the pope and lived right christianly.
Unto Christ's Church he did a great honour;
But I let all his story pass me by
Of Constance is my tale, especially
In ancient Roman histories men may find
The life of Maurice, I ve it not in mind

This King Alla when came the proper day,
With his Constance his saintly wife so sweet,
To England went again, by the straight way,
Where they did live in joy and quiet meet
But little while it lasts us thus complete
Joy of this world for time will not abide,
From day to day it changes as the tide

Who ever lived in such delight one day
That was not stirred therefrom by his conscience,
Desire, or anger, or some kindred fray,
Envy, or pride, or passion, or offense?
I say but to one ending this sentence
That but a little while in joy's pleasance
Lasted the bliss of Alla and Constance

For death, that takes from high and low his rent,
When but a year had passed as I should guess,
Out of the world King Alla quickly sent
For whom Constance felt heavy wretchedness
Now let us pray that God his soul will bless!
And of Dame Constance, finally to say,
Towards the town of Rome she took her way,

To Rome is come this holy one and pure,
And finds that all her friends are safe and sound,
For now she's done with all her adventure,
And when she'd come there, and her father found,
Down on her two knees fell she to the ground,
Weeping but joyful gave she God her praise
A hundred thousand times for all His ways

In virtue, and with alms and holy deed,
They all live there nor ever asunder wend,
Till death does part them, such a life they lead
And fare now well my tale is at an end
And Jesus Christ Who of His might may send
Joy after woe, govern us by His grace
And keep us all that now are in this place! Amen

HERE ENDETH THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAW

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

Experience, though no authority
Were in this world, were good enough for me,
To speak of woe that is in all marriage;
For, masters, since I was twelve years of age,
Thanks be to God Who is for aye alive,
Of husbands at church door have I had five;
For men so many times have wedded me;
And all were worthy men in their degree.
But someone told me not so long ago
That since Our Lord, save once, would never go
To wedding (that at Cana in Galilee),
Thus, by this same example, showed He me
I never should have married more than once.
Lo and behold! What sharp words, for the nonce,
Beside a well Lord Jesus, God and man,
Spoke in reproving the Samaritan:
'For thou hast had five husbands,' thus said He,
'And he whom thou hast now to be with thee
Is not thine husband.' Thus He said that day,
But what He meant thereby I cannot say;
And I would ask now why that same fifth man
Was not husband to the Samaritan?
How many might she have, then, in marriage?
For I have never heard, in all my age,
Clear exposition of this number shown,
Though men may guess and argue up and down.
But well I know and say, and do not lie,
God bade us to increase and multiply;
That worthy text can I well understand.
And well I know He said, too, my husband
Should father leave, and mother, and cleave to me;
But no specific number mentioned He,
Whether of bigamy or octogamy;
Why should men speak of it reproachfully?
Lo, there's the wise old king Dan Solomon;
I understand he had more wives than one;
And now would God it were permitted me
To be refreshed one half as oft as he!
Which gift of God he had for all his wives!
No man has such that in this world now lives.
God knows, this noble king, it strikes my wit,
The first night he had many a merry fit
With each of them, so much he was alive!
Praise be to God that I have wedded five![1]
Welcome the sixth whenever come he shall.
Forsooth, I'll not keep chaste for good and all;
When my good husband from the world is gone,
Some Christian man shall marry me anon;

"Experience, though noon auctoritee
Were in this world, were right y-nough to me
To speke of wo that is in mariage;
For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,
Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had fyve;
For I so ofte have y-wedded be;
And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
But me was told certeyn, nat longe agoon is,
That sith that Crist ne wente never but onis
To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
That by the same ensample taughte he me
That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones
Besyde a welle Jesus, god and man,
Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:
'Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes,' quod he,
'And thilke man, the which that hath now thee,
Is noght thyn housbond'; thus seyde he certeyn;
What that he mente ther-by, I can nat seyn;
But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?
How manye mighte she have in mariage?
Yet herde I never tellen in myn age
Upon this nombre diffinicioun;
Men may devyne and glosen up and doun.
But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,
God bad us for to wexe and multiplye;
That gentil text can I wel understonde.
Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbonde
Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;
But of no nombre mencioun made he,
Of bigamye or of octogamye;
Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?
Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salomon;
I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;
As, wolde god, it leveful were to me
To be refresshed half so ofte as he!
Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his wyvis!
No man hath swich, that in this world alyve is.
God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
The firste night had many a mery fit
With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve!
Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve![1]
Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he shal.
For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in al;
Whan myn housbond is fro the world y-gon,
Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;

[1] Here some MSS. insert the following genuine (but rejected) lines:

Of whom I did pick out and choose the best
Both for their nether purse and for their chest.
Different schools make divers perfect clerks,
Different methods learned in sundry works
Make the good workman perfect, certainly.
Of full five husbands tutoring am I.

Of whiche I have y-piked out the beste
Bothe of hir nether purs and of hir cheste.
Diverse scoles maken parfyt clerkes,
Divers praktik in many sondry werkes
Maketh the werkman parfit sekirly;
Of fyve husbondes scoleiyng am I.

For thanne th apostle seith, that I am free
To wedde, a godd s half, wher it lyketh me
He seith that to be wedded is no sinne,
Bet is to be wedded than to brinne

And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two,
And many another holy man also
Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,
That hye god defended mariage
By expres word? I pray you, telleth me,
Or wher comanded he virginitee?
I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
Th'apostel whan he speketh of maydenhede,
He seyde that precept ther-of hadde he noon
Men may conseille a womman to been oon,
But conseilling is no comandement,
He putte it in our owene jugement
For hadde god comanded maydenhede,
Thanne hadde he dampned wedding with the
dede
And certes if ther were no seed y sowe,
Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?
Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste
A thing of which his maister yaf noon heste
The dart is set up for virginitee,

Virginit-e is greet perfeccioun
And continence eek with devocioun
But Crist that of perfeccioun is welle,
Bad nat every wight he sholde go selle
All that he hadde, and give it to the pore,

For then the apostle says that I am free
To wed in God s name where it pleases me
He says that to be wedded is no sin
Better to marry than to burn within
What care I though folk speak reproachfully
Of wicked Lamech and his bigamy?
I know well Abraham was holy man
And Jacob too as far as know I can
And each of them had spouses more than two
And many another holy man also

The apostle when he speaks of maidenhead
He sa d commandment of the Lord he d none.
Men may advise a woman to be one
But such advice is not commandment no
He left the thing to our own judgment so
For had Lord God commanded maidenhood,
He d have condemned all marriage as not
good
And certainly if there were no seed sown
Virginity—where then should it be grown?
Paul dared not to forbid us at the least
A thing whereof his Master d no behest
The dart is set up for virginity
Catch it who can who runs best let us see
But this word is not meant for every wight
But where God wills to g ve it of His might
I know well that the apostle was a maid
Nevertheless and though he wrote and said
He would that everyone were such as he
All is not counsel to virginity

And though twere good no woman s flesh to touch,
He meant in his own bed or on his couch
For peril tis fire and tow to assemble

A wise wife, if she knows what's for her good
Will swear the crow is mad and in this mood
Call up for witness to it her own maid
But hear me now, for this is what I said
Sir Dotard is it thus you stand today?
Why is my neighbour's wife so fine and gay?
She's honoured over all where'er she goes
I sit at home I have no decent clothes.
What do you do there at my neighbour's house?
Is she so fair? Are you so amorous?
Why whisper to our maid? *Benedicite!*
Sir Lecher old, let your seductions be!
And if I have a gossip or a friend
Innocently you blame me like a fiend
If I but walk for company to his house!
You come home here as drunken as a mouse
And preach there on your bench a curse on you!
You tell me it's a great misfortune too
To wed a girl who costs more than she's worth
And if she's rich and of a higher birth
You say it's torment to abide her folly
And put up with her pride and melancholy
And if she be right fair you utter knave,
You say that every lecher will her have
She may no while in chastity abide
That is assailed by all and on each side
You say some men desire us for our gold,
Some for our shape and some for fairness told
And some that she can either sing or dance
And some for courtesy and dalliance
Some for her hands and for her arms so small,
Thus all goes to the devil in your tale
You say men cannot keep a castle wall
That's long assailed on all sides and by all
And if that she be foul you say that she
Hankers for every man that she may see
For like a spaniel will she leap on him
Until she finds a man to be victim
And not a grey goose swims there in the lake
But finds a gander willing her to take
You say it is a hard thing to enfold
Her whom no man will in his own arms hold
This say you worthless when you go to bed
And that no wise man needs thus to be wed
No nor a man that hearkens unto Heaven
With furious thunder claps and fiery levin
May your thin withered wrinkled neck be broke
You say that dripping eaves and also smoke
And wives contentious will make men to flee
Out of their houses ah *benedicite!*
What ails such an old fellow so to chide?
You say that all we wives our vices hide
Till we are married then we show them well
That is a scoundrel's proverb let me tell!
You say that oxen asses horses hounds
Are tried out variously and on good grounds
Basins and bowls before men will them buy
And spoons and stools and all such goods you try
And so with pots and clothes and all array
But of their wives men get no trial, you say,

A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,
Shal beren him on hond the cow is wood,
And take witnesse of hir owene mayde
Of hir assent, but herkneth how I sayde
"'Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array?
Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?
She is honoured over-al ther she goth;
I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.
What dostow at my neighebores hous?
Is she so fair? artow so amorous?
What rowne ye with our mayde? *ben'cite!*
Sir olde lechour, lat thy japes be!
And if I have a gossib or a freend,
With-outen gilt, thou chydest as a feend,
If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous!
Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,
And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!
Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief
To wedde a povre womman, for costage,
And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,
Than seistow that it is a tormentrye
To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye
And if that she be fair, thou verray knave,
Thou seyst that every holour wol hir have;
She may no whyle in chastitee abyde,
That is assailled up-on ech a syde
Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for richesse,
Som for our shap, and som for our fairnesse,
And som, for she can outher singe or daunce,
And som, *for* gentillesse and daliaunce,
Som, for hir handes and hir armes smale,
Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale
Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castelwal,
It may so longe assailled been over-al
And if that she be foul, thou seist that she
Coveiteth every man that she may see;
For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,
Til that she finde som man hir to chepe,
Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the lake,
As, seistow, that wol been with-oute make
And seyst, it is an hard thing for to welde
A thing that no man wol, his thankes, helde
Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde,
And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,
Ne no man that entendeth un to hevene
With wilde thonder-dint and firy levene
Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!
Thow seyst that dropping houses, and eek smoke,
And chyding wyves, maken men to flee
Out of hir owene hous, a! *ben'cite!*
What eyleth swich an old man for to chyde?
Thow seyst, we wyves wol our vyces hyde
Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe,
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!
Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
They been assayed at diverse stoundes,
Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,
Spones and stoles, and al swich housbondrye,
And so been pottes, clothes, and array,
But folk of wyves maken noon assay

Til they be wedded, olde dotard shrewe!
And than, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe
Thou seist also, that it displeseth me
But if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,
And but thou poure alwey up-on my face,
And clepe me "*faire dame*" in every place,
And but thou make a feste on thilke day
That I was born, and make me fresh and gay,
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere with-inne my bour,
And to my fadres folk and his allyes,—
Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!
And yet of our apprentice Janekyn
For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,
And for he squiereth me both up and doun,
Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun,
I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed
to-morwe
But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,
The keyes of thy cheste awey fro me?
It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee
... dame?
... ed,
... onde"
... care
Have thou ynough, thee thar ... thee
Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array
That it is peril of our chastitee,
And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce thee,
And seye thise wordes in the apostles name,
'In habit, maad with chastitee and shame,
Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod he,
'And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche",
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat
Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat,
For who-so wolde senge a cattes skin,
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in,
And if the cattes skin be slyk and gay,

Till they are married base old dotard you!
And then we show what evil we can do
You say also that it displeases me
Unless you praise and flatter my beauty,
And save you gaze always upon my face
And call me lovely lady every place
And save you make a feast upon that day
When I was born and give me garments gay,
And save due honour to my nurse is paid
As well as to my faithful chambermaid
And to my father's folk and his allies—
Thus you go on old barrel full of lies!
And yet of our apprentice young Jenkin,
For his crisp hair showing like gold so fine
Because he squires me walking up and down,
A false suspicion in your mind is sown
I'd give him naught though you were dead
tomorrow
... this why do you hide with sorrow
... me?
... me?
... our aim,
... te best
... ge
Of where we go ...
Of all men the most blessed may he be,
That wise astrologer Dan Ptolemy
Who says this proverb in his Almagest
Of all men he's in wisdom the highest
That nothing cares who has the world in hand"
And by this proverb shall you understand
Since you've enough why do you reck or care
... all other folks may fare?
Since you've enoug ... d
You say also that if we make us gay
With clothing all in costliest array
That it's a danger to our chastity
And you must back the saying up pardie!
Repeating these words in the apostle's name
In habits meet for chastity not shame
Your women shall be garmented said he
And not with brodered hair or jewellery
Or pearls or gold or costly gowns and chic",
After your text and after your rubric
I will not follow more than would a gnat
... too that I was like a cat,

She will not keep in house a half a day,
But out she'll go, ere dawn of any day,
To show her skin and caterwaul and play
This is to say, if I'm a little gay,
To show my rags I'll gad about all day
 Sir Ancient Fool, what ails you with your spies?
Though you pray Argus, with his hundred eyes
To be my body-guard and do his best
Faith, he shan't hold me, save I am modest
I could delude him easily—trust me!
 You said, also, that there are three things—three—
The which things are a trouble on this earth
And that no man may ever endure the fourth
O dear Sir Rogue, may Christ cut short your life!
Yet do you preach and say a hateful wife
Is to be reckoned one of these mischances
Are there no other kinds of resemblances
That you may liken thus your parables to
But must a hapless wife be made to do?
 You liken woman's love to very Hell
To desert land where waters do not well
You liken it, also, unto wildfire
The more it burns, the more it has desire
To consume everything that burned may be
You say that just as worms destroy a tree
Just so a wife destroys her own husband
Men know this who are bound in marriage band
 Masters, like this, as you must understand
Did I my old men charge and censure, and
Claim that they said these things in drunkenness,
And all was false, but yet I took witness
Of Jenkin and of my dear niece also
O Lord, the pain I gave them and the woe
All guiltless, too, by God's grief exquisite!
For like a stallion could I neigh and bite
I could complain, though mine was all the guilt
Or else full many a time I'd lost the tilt
Whoso comes first to mill first gets meal ground
I whimpered first and so did them confound
They were right glad to hasten to excuse
[illegible] had never done, save in my ruse
[illegible] by this hand
[illegible]

Deemed it was love [illegible]
I swore that all my walking out at night
Was but to spy on girls he kept outright
And under cover of that I had much mirth
For all such wit is given us at birth
Deceit, weeping, and spinning, does God give
To women, naturally, the while they live
And thus of one thing I speak boastfully
I got the best of each one, finally
By trick, or force, or by some kind of thing
As by continual growls or murmuring
Especially in bed had they mischance
There would I chide and give them no pleasance,
I would no longer in the bed abide
If I but felt his arm across my side
Till he had paid his ransom unto me,
Then would I let him do his nicety

She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,
But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,
To shewe hir skin, and goon a-caterwawed,
This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe,
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe
 Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyën?
Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hundred yën,
To be my warde-cors, as he can best,
In feith he shal nat kepe me but me lest,
Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I thee.
 Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges three,
The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe
O leve sir shrewe, Jesu shorte thy lyf!
Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf
Y-rekened is for oon of thise meschances.
Been ther none othere maner resemblances
That ye may lykne your parables to,
But if a sely wyf be oon of tho?
 Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,
To bareyne lond, ther water may not dwelle.
Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desyr
To consume every thing that brent wol be
Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende a tree,
Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde,
This knowe they that been to wyves bonde.'
 Lordinges, right thus, as ye have understonde,
Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde,
That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse,
And al was fals, but that I took witnesse
On Janekin and on my nece also
O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,
Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne!
For as an hors I coude byte and whyne
I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,
Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt
Who-so that first to mille comth, first grint,
I pleyned first, so was our werre y-stint.
They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve
Of thing of which they never agilte hir lyve
 Of wenches wolde I beren him on honde,
Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he stonde
[illegible] it his herte, for that he
[illegible] so greet chiertee
[illegible]

Deceite, weping, [illegible]
To wommen kindely, whyl they may live
And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech degree,
By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thing,
As by continuel murmur or grucching
Namely a-bedde hadden they meschaunce,
Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no plesaunce,
I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
If that I felte his arm over my syde,
Til he had maad his raunson un-to me,
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee

And ther fore every man this tale I telle,
Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle
With empty hand men may none haukes lure,
For winning wolde I al his lust endure,
And make me a feyned appetyt,
And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt,
That made me that ever I wolde hem chyde
For thogh the pope had seten hem bisyde,
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord
For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for word
As help me verray god omnipotent,
Thogh I right now sholde make my testament,
I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit
I broghte it so aboute by my wit,
That they moste yeve it up, as for the beste,
Or elles hadde we never been in reste
For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,
Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun
Thanne wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak keep

And but ye do, certein we shal yow teche
That it is fair to have a wyf in pees
Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees,
And sith a man is more resonable
Than womman is, ye moste been suffrable
What eyleth yow to grucche thus and grone?
Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?
Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel,
Peter! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel!
For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,
I coude walke as fresh as is a rose,

Whan I had dronke a draughte of swete wyn.
Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn,
That with a staf birafte his wyf hir lyf,

…, lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
Up-on my yowthe, and on my jolitee,
It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote
Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote
That I have had my world as in my tyme
But age, allas! that al wol envenyme,

And therefore to all men this tale I tell,
Let gain who may for everything s to sell
With empty hand men may no falcons lure,
For profit would I all his lust endure
And make for him a well feigned appetite,
Yet I in bacon never had delight,
And that is why I used so much to chide
For if the pope were seated there beside
I d not have spared them no at their own board
For by my truth I paid them word for word
So help me the True God Omnipotent
Though I right now should make my testament,
I owe them not a word that was not quit
I brought it so about, and by my wit
That they must give it up as for the best,
Or otherwise we d never have had rest
For though he glared and scowled like lion mad,
Yet failed he of the end he wished he had
Then would I say Good dearie see you keep
In mind how meek is Wilkin our old sheep
Come near, my spouse come let me kiss your cheek!
You should be always patient aye and meek,
And have a sweetly scrupulous tenderness
Since you so preach of old Job s patience yes
Suffer always since you so well can preach
And save you do be sure that we will teach
That it is well to leave a wife in peace
One of us two must bow, to be at ease
And since a man s more reasonable they say,
Than woman is you must have patience aye
What ails you that you grumble thus and groan?
Is it because you d have my cunt alone?
Why take it all lo have it every bit
Peter! Beshrew you but you re fond of it!
For if I would go peddle my *belle chose*

Now will I tell you of my fourth husband
My fourth husband he was a reveller

Has taken away my beauty and my pith;

"I say that in my heart I'd great despite
When he of any other had delight
But he was quit, by God and by Saint Jocel
I made, of the same wood, a staff most gross;
Not with my body and in manner foul,
But certainly I showed so gay a soul
That in his own thick grease I made him fry
For anger and for utter jealousy.
By God, on earth I was his purgatory,
For which I hope his soul lives now in glory
For God knows, many a time he sat and sung
When the shoe bitterly his foot had wrung
There was no one, save God and he, that knew
How, in so many ways, I'd twist the screw

'Twas waste to bury him expensively

God grant his soul may never get to Hell!
And yet he was to me most brutal, too,
My ribs yet feel as they were black and blue,

Gave of his love most sparingly to me.
We women have, if I am not to lie,
In this love matter, a quaint fantasy,
Look out a thing we may not lightly have,
And after that we'll cry all day and crave.
Forbid a thing, and that thing covet we,
Press hard upon us, then we turn and flee.
Sparingly offer we our goods, when fair,
Great crowds at market make for dearer ware,

For had my husband pissed against a wall,
Or done a thing that might have cost his life,
To her and to another worthy wife,

Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith;
Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith!

I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt
That he of any other had delyt.
But he was quit, by god and by seint Jocel
I made him of the same wode a croce,
Nat of my body in no foul manere,
But certeinly, I made folk swich chere,

He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem,
And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,
Al is his tombe noght so curious
As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,
Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
It nis but wast to burie him preciously.
Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule reste,
He is now in the grave and in his cheste.
Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.
God lete his soule never come in helle!
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe;
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.
But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
And ther-with-al so wel coude he me glose,
Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*,
That thogh he hadde me bet on every boon,
He coude winne agayn my love anoon
I trowe I loved him beste, for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me
We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye,
In this matere a queynte fantasye,
Wayte what thing we may nat lightly have,
Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.
Forbede us thing, and that desyren we,
Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we flee.
With daunger oute we al our chaffare,
Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys,
This knoweth every womman that is wys.
My fifthe housbonde, god his soule blesse!
Which that I took for love and no richesse,
He som tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
And had left scole, and wente at hoom to bord
With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,
God have hir soule! hir name was Alisoun.
She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I thee!
To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.
For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his lyf,
To hir, and to another worthy wyf,

And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
I wolde han told his conseil every-deel
And so I dide ful often, god it woot,
That made his face ful often reed and hoor
For verray shame, and blamed him-self for he
Had told to me so greet a privetee
  And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
(So often tymes I to my gossib wente,
For ever yet I lovede to be gay,
And for to walke, in March, Averille, and May,
Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis,
That Jankin clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,
And I my-self, in-to the feldes wente
Myn housbond was at London al that Lente,
I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
And for to see, and eek for to be seye
Of lusty folk, what wiste I wher my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
Therefore I made my visitaciouns,
To vigilies and to processiouns,
To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,
To pleyes of miracles and mariages,
And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes
Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,
Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel,
And wostow why? for they were used weel
  Now wol I tellen forth what happed me
I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,
Til trewely we hadde swich daliance,
This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
I spak to him, and seyde him, how that he,
If I were widwe, sholde wedde me
For certeinly, I sey for no bobance,
Yet was I never with-outen purveyance
Of mariage, n'of othere thinges eek
I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,
That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
And if that faille, thanne is al y-do
  I bar him on honde, he hadde enchanted me,
My dame taughte me that soutiltee
And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night,
He wolde han slayn me as I lay up right,
And al my bed was ful of verray blood,
But yet I hope that he shal do me good,
For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.
And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
As wel of this as of other thinges more
  But now sir, lat me see, what I shal seyn?
A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn
  Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,
I weep algate, and made sory chere,
As wyves moten, for it is usage,
And with my coverchief covered my visage,
But for that I was purveyed of a make,
I weep but smal, and that I undertake
  To churche was myn housbond born a morwe
With neighebores, that for him maden sorwe,
And Jankin oure clerk was oon of tho
As help me god, whan that I saugh him go
After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,

And to my niece whom I loved always well,
I would have told it—every bit I'd tell,
And did so many and many a time God wot,
Which made his face full often red and hot
For utter shame he blamed himself that he
Had told me of so deep a privity
  So it befell that on a time in Lent
(For oftentimes I to my gossip went
Since I loved always to be glad and gay
And to walk out in March April and May,
From house to house to hear the latest malice),
Jenkin the clerk and my gossip Dame Alis,
And I myself into the meadows went
My husband was in London all that Lent,
I had the greater leisure then to play,
And to observe and to be seen, I say,
By pleasant folk what knew I where my face
Was destined to be loved or in what place?
Therefore I made my visits round about
To vigils and processions of devout
To preaching too and shrines of pilgrimage,
To miracle plays, and always to each marriage,
And wore my scarlet skirt before all wights
These worms and all these moths and all these mites
I say it at my peril never ate
And know you why? I wore it early and late.
  Now will I tell you what befell to me.
I say that in the meadows walked we three
Till truly, we had come to such dalliance
This clerk and I that of my vigilance
I spoke to him and told him how that he
Were I a widow might well marry me.
For certainly I say it not to brag
But I was never quite without a bag
Full of the needs of marriage that I seek
I hold a mouse's heart not worth a leek
That has but one hole into which to run
And if it fail of that then all is done
  I made him think he had enchanted me,
My mother taught me all that subtlety
And then I said I'd dreamed of him all night
He would have slain me as I lay upright,
And all my bed was full of very blood
But yet I hoped that he would do me good
For blood betokens gold as I was taught
And all was false I dreamed of him just—naught,
Save as I acted on my mother's lore
As well in this thing as in many more
  But now let's see what was I going to say?
Aha by God I know! It goes this way
  When my fourth husband lay upon his bier
I wept enough and made but sorry cheer
As wives must always for it's custom's grace,
And with my kerchief covered up my face
But since I was provided with a mate
I really wept but little I may state.
  To church my man was borne upon the morrow
By neighbours who for him made signs of sorrow,
And Jenkin our good clerk was one of them.
So help me God when rang the requiem
After the bier I thought he had a pair
Of legs and feet so clean-cut and so fair

So help me God, I was a healthy one,
And fair and rich and young and full of fun,
And truly, as my husbands all told me,
I had the silkiest *quoniam* that could be

Alas, alas, that ever love was sin!
I followed always my own inclination

And also in another private place
For God so truly my salvation be
As I have never loved for policy,
But ever followed my own appetite,
Though he were short or tall, or black or white;
I took no heed, so that he cared for me,
How poor he was nor even of what degree
"What should I say now, save, at the month's end,
This jolly, gentle, Jenkin clerk, my friend,
Had wedded me full ceremoniously,
And to him gave I all the land in fee
That ever had been given me before;
But later I repented me full sore
He never suffered me to have my way
By God, he smote me on the ear, one day,
Because I tore out of his book a leaf,
So that from this my ear is grown quite deaf
Stubborn I was as is a lioness,

Where he commands so freely and so fast

sallows,
And spur his blind horse to run over fallows,
And let his wife alone go seeking hallows,
Is worthy to be hanged upon the gallows'
But all for naught, I didn't care a haw

That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.
He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old,
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth,
But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel,
I hadde the prente of seynt Venus seel.
As help me god, I was a lusty oon,
And faire and riche, and yong, and wel bigoon;
And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,
I had the beste *quoniam* mighte be
For certes, I am al Venerien
In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien.
Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.
Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars therinne.
Allas! allas! that ever love was sinne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun;
That made me I coude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe
Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
And also in another privee place
For, god so wis be my savacioun,
I ne loved never by no discrecioun,
But ever folwede myn appetyt,
Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt,
I took no kepe, so that he lyked me,
How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.
What sholde I seye, but, at the monthes ende,
This joly clerk Jankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,
And to him yaf I al the lond and fee
That ever was me yeven ther-bifore;
But afterward repented me ful sore
He nolde suffre nothing of my list.
By god, he smoot me ones on the list,
For that I rente out of his book a leef,
That of the strook myn ere wex al deef.
Stiborn I was as is a leonesse,

And me of olde Romayn gestes teche,
How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefte his wyf,
And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,
Noght but for open-heeded he hir say
Lokinge out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romayne tolde he me by name,
That, for his wyf was at a someres game
With-oute his witing, he forsook hir eke.
And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute;
Than wolde he seye right thus, withouten doute,
'Who-so that buildeth his hous al of
salwes,
And priketh his blinde hors over the falwes,
And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!'
But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe

Of his proverbes n'of his olde sawe,
Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be
I hate him that my vices telleth me,

That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys,
And eek the Parables of Salomon,
Ovydes Art, and bokes many on,
And alle thise wer bounden in o volume
And every night and day was his custume,
Whan he had leyser and vacacioun
From other worldly occupacioun,
To reden on this book of wikked wyves
He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
Than been of gode wyves in the Bible
For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
But if it be of holy seintes lyves,
Ne of noon other womman never the mo
Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?[1]
By god, if wommen hadde writen stories,
As clerkes han with inne hir oratories
They wolde han writen of

That I was beten for a book, pardee
Up-on a

For all his proverbs nor for his old saw
Nor yet would I by him corrected be
I hate one that my vices tells to me

Chrysippus Trotula and Heloise
Who was abbess near Paris diocese,
And too the *Proverbs* of King Solomon
And Ovid s *Art* and books full many a one
And all of these were bound in one volume

He knew of them more legends and more lives
Than are of good wives written in the Bible
For trust me, it s impossible, no libel
That any cleric shall speak well of wives,
Unless it be of saints and holy lives
But naught for other women will they do
Who painted first the lion tell me who?[1]
By God if women had but written stories

Are in their lives antagonistic thus
For Mercury loves wisdom and science,
And Venus loves but pleasure and expense
Because they different dispositions own,
Each falls when other s in ascendant shown
And God knows Mercury is desolate
In Pisces wherein Venus rules in state,
And Venus falls when Mercury is raised,
Therefore no woman by a clerk is praised
A clerk when he is old and can naught do
Of Venus labours worth his worn-out shoe
Then sits he down and writes in his dotage,
That women cannot keep vow of marriage!
But now to tell you as I started to,

Lo here, expressly of woman may you find
That woman was the ruin of

[1]Referring to one of Æsop s fables.

Then read he out how Samson lost his hairs
Sleeping his leman cut them with her shears
And through this treason lost he either eye
Then read he out if I am not to lie,
Of Hercules, and Dejanira's desire
That caused him to go set himself on fire
Nothing escaped him of the pain and woe
That Socrates had with his spouses two
How Xantippe threw piss upon his head
This hapless man sat still as he were dead
He wiped his head no more durst he complain
Than Ere the thunder ceases comes the rain '
Then of Pasiphae the queen of Crete
For cursedness he thought the story sweet
Fie! Say *no more*—it is an awful thing—
Of her so horrible lust and love liking
Of Clytemnestra for her lechery
Who caused her husband's death by treachery
He read all this with greatest zest I vow
He told me too just when it was and how
Amphiaraus at Thebes lost his life
My husband had a legend of his wife
Eriphyle who for a brooch of gold
In secrecy to hostile Greeks had told
Whereat her husband had his hiding place
For which he found at Thebes but sorry grace
' Of Livia and Lucia told he me
For both of them their husbands killed you see
The one for love the other killed for hate
Livia her husband on an evening late
Made drink some poison for she was his foe
Lucia lecherous loved her husband so
That to the end he'd always of her think
She gave him such a philtre for love-drink
That he was dead or ever it was morrow
And husbands thus by same means, came to sorrow
Then did he tell how one Latumius
Complained unto his comrade Arrius
That in his garden grew a baleful tree
Whereon he said his wives and they were three
Had hanged themselves for wretchedness and woe
O brother Arrius said and did they so?
Give me a graft of that same blessed tree
And in my garden planted it shall be!
Of wives of later date he also read
How some had slain their husbands in their bed
And let their lovers shag them all the night
While corpses lay upon the floor upright
And some had driven nails into the brain
While husbands slept and in such wise were slain
And some had given them poison in their drink
He told more evil than the mind can think
And therewithal he knew of more proverbs
Than in this world there grows of grass or herbs
Better ' he said your habitation be
With lion wild or dragon foul said he
'Than with a woman who will nag and chide '
Better ' he said on the housetop abide
Than with a brawling wife down in the house,
Such are so wicked and contrarious
They hate the thing their husband loves for aye '
He said "a woman throws her shame away

Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres,
Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir sheres,
Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe his yen
Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules and of his Dianyre,
That caused him to sette himself a fyre
No-thing forgat he the penaunce and wo
That Socrates had with hise wyves two,
How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his heed,
This sely man sat stille, as he were deed,
He wyped his heed, namore dorste he seyn
But er that thonder stinte, comth a reyn.'
Of Phasipha, that was the quene of Crete,
For shrewednesse, him thoughte the tale swete;
Fy! spek na more—it is a grisly thing—
Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking
Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,
That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,
He redde it with ful good devocioun
He tolde me eek for what occasioun
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf,
Myn housbond hadde a legende of his wyf,
Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively un to the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a place,
For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace
Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,
They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye,
That oon for love, that other was for hate,
Lyma hir housbond, on an even late,
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo
Lucya, likerous, loved hir housbond so,
That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir thinke,
She yaf him swich a maner love-drinke,
That he was deed, er it were by the morwe,
And thus algates housbondes han sorwe
Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius
Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,
That in his gardin growed swich a tree,
On which, he seyde, how that his wyves three
Hanged hem self for herte despitous
O leve brother,' quod this Arrius,
'Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardin planted shal it be!'
Of later date, of wyves hath he red,
That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,
And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the night
Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-right
And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn
Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han hem slayn.
Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir drinke
He spak more harm than herte may bithinke
And ther-with al, he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes
'Bet is,' quod he, 'thyn habitacioun
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usinge for to chyde
Bet is,' quod he, 'hye in the roof abyde
Than with an angry wyf doun in the hous,
They been so wikked and contrarious,
They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay '
He seyde, 'a womman cast hir shame away,

Whan she cast of hir smok', and forthermo,
'A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose '
Who wolde wenen, or who wolde suppose
The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?
And whan I saugh he wolde never fyne
To reden on this cursed book al night,
Al sodeynly three leves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke,
I with my fist so took him on the cheke,
That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun
And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,
And with his fist he smoot me on the heed,
That in the floor I lay as I were deed
And when he saugh how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wolde han fled his way,
Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde
'O! hastow slayn me, false theef?' I seyde,
'And for my land thus hastow mordred me?
Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee '
And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,
And seyde, 'dere suster Alisoun,
As help me god, I shal thee never smyte,
That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte
Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke'—
And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the cheke,
And seyde, 'theef, thus muchel am I wreke,
Now wol I dye, I may ne lenger speke '
But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,
We fille acorded, by us selven two
He yaf me al the brydel in myn hond
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge and of his hond also,
And made him brenne his book anon right tho
And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,
By maistrie, al the soverayntee,
And that he seyde, 'myn owene trewe wyf,
Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf,
Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat'—
After that day we hadden never debaat
God help me so, I was to him as kinde
As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,
And also trewe, and so was he to me.
I prey to god that sit in magestee,
So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!
Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here "

When she throws off her smock,' and further, too
'A woman fair, save she be chaste also,
Is like a ring of gold in a sow's nose '
Who would imagine or who would suppose
What grief and pain were in this heart of mine?
"And when I saw he'd never cease, in fine,
His reading in this cursed book at night,
Three leaves of it I snatched and tore outright
Out of his book, as he read on, and eke
I with my fist so took him on the cheek
That in our fire he reeled and fell right down.
Then he got up as does a wild lion,
And with his fist he struck me on the head,
And on the floor I lay as I were dead
And when he saw how limp and still I lay,
He was afraid and would have run away,
Until at last out of my swoon I made
'Oh, have you slain me, you false thief?' I said,
'And for my land have you thus murdered me?
Kiss me before I die, and let me be '
He came to me and near me he knelt down,
And said 'O my dear sister Alison,
So help me God, I'll never strike you more,
What I have done, you are to blame therefor
But all the same forgiveness now I seek!'
And thereupon I hit him on the cheek,
And said 'Thief, so much vengeance do I wreak!
Now will I die, I can no longer speak!'
But at the last, and with much care and woe,
We made it up between ourselves And so
He put the bridle reins within my hand
To have the governing of house and land,
And of his tongue and of his hand also,
And made him burn his book right then, oho!
And when I had thus gathered unto me
Masterfully, the entire sovereignty,
And he had said 'My own true wedded wife,
Do as you please the term of all your life
Guard your own honour and keep fair my state'—
After that day we never had debate
God help me now, I was to him as kind
As any wife from Denmark unto Ind,
And also true and so was he to me
I pray to God, Who sits in majesty
To bless his soul out of His mercy dear!
Now will I tell my tale, if you will hear "

BEHOLD THE WORDS BETWEEN THE SUMMONER AND THE FRIAR

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this,
"Now, dame," quod he, "so have I joye or blis,
This is a long preamble of a tale!"
And whan the Somnour herde the Frere gale,
"Lo!" quod the Somnour, "goddes armes two!
A frere wol entremette him ever-mo
Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere
Wol falle in every dish and eek matere
What spekestow of preambulacioun?
What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit doun,
Thou lettest our disport in this manere "
'Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?" quod the Frere,
"Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,

The friar laughed when he had heard all this
"Now dame," said he, "so have I joy or bliss
This is a long preamble to a tale!"
And when the summoner heard this friar's hail,
"Lo!" said the summoner, "by God's arms two!
A friar will always interfere, mark you
Behold, good men, a housefly and a friar
Will fall in every dish and matters higher
Why speak of preambling? you in your gown?
What! Amble, trot, hold peace, or go sit down,
You hinder our diversion thus to inquire "
"Aye, say you so, sir summoner?" said the friar,
"Now by my faith I will, before I go,

Replied this summoner, "and beshrew me
If I do not tell tales here, two or three,

desire"

Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,
That alle the folk shal laughen in this place"
"Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy face,"
Quod this Somnour, "and I bishrewe me,
But-if I telle tales two or three
Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,
That I shal make thyn herte for to morne;
For wel I woot thy pacience is goon"
Our hoste cryde "pees! and that anoon!"
And seyde, "lat the womman telle hir tale.
Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale
Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best."
"Al redy, sir," quod she, "right as yow lest,
If I have licence of this worthy Frere."
"Yis, dame," quod he, "tel forth, and I wol here"

HERE ENDETH THE WIFE OF BATH HER PROLOGUE

THE TALE OF THE WIFE OF BATH

HERE BEGINNETH THE TALE OF THE WIFE OF BATH

Danced oftentimes on many a green mead,
This was the old opinion, as I read
I speak of many hundred years ago,
But now no man can see the elves, you know
For now the so great charity and prayers
Of limiters and other holy friars
That do infest each land and every stream

ers,

—

For where was wont to walk full many an elf
Right there walks now the limiter himself
In noons and afternoons and in mornings,
Saying his matins and such holy things,
As he goes round his district in his gown
Women may now go safely up and down,
In every copse or under every tree,

In th'olde dayes of the king Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
Al was this land fulfild of fayerye.
The elf-queen, with hir joly companye,
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede,
This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago,
But now can no man see none elves mo
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of limitours and othere holy freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem,
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes, bernes, shipnes, dayeryes,
This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himself
In undermeles and in morweninges,
And seyth his matins and his holy thinges
As he goth in his limitacioun
Wommen may go saufly up and doun,
In every bush, or under every tree,
Ther is noon other incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.

That dampned was this knight for to be deed
By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;

(fowl) beside a stream or mere

But that the quene and othere ladies mo

And after this thus spak she to the knight,

m ght

pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place."
Wo was this knight and sorwefully he
syketh
But what! he may nat do al as him lyketh
And at the laste, he chees him for to wende,
And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
With swich answere as god wolde him purveye,

Two creatures accordinge in fere
Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse,
Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde, jolynesse,
Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust abedde,
And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde
Somme seyde that our hertes been most esed,
Whan that we been y flatered any y plesed
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye,
A man shal winne us best with flaterye,
And with attendance, and with bisinesse,
Been we y lymed, bothe more and lesse

What thing it is that women most desire
Be wise and keep your neck from iron direl
And if you cannot tell it me anon
Then will I give you license to be gone
A twelvemonth and a day to search and learn
Sufficient answer in this grave concern
And your knight's word I'll have, ere forth you
pace
To yield your body to me in this place
Grieved was this knight and sorrowfully he
sighed
But there! he could not do as pleased his pride
And at the last he chose that he would wend
And come again upon the twelvemonth's end
With such an answer as God might purvey
And so he took his leave and went his way
He sought out every house and every place
Wherein he hoped to find that he had grace
To learn what women love the most of all
But nowhere ever did it him befall
To find upon the question stated here
Two persons who agreed with statement clear
Some said that women all loved best riches
Some said fair fame and some said prettiness
Some rich array some said 'twas lust abed
And often to be widowed and re wed
Some said that our poor hearts are aye most eased
When we have been most flattered and thus pleased
And he went near the truth I will not lie
A man may win us best with flattery
And with attentions and with busyness
We're often limed the greater and the less
And some say too that we do love the best
To be quite free to do our own behest

Ovyde, amonges othere thinges smale,

Said Midas had beneath his long curled hair,
Two asses ears that grew in secret there
The which defect he hid as best he might,

Nor would she tell it for her own deep shame
Nevertheless she thought she would have died
Because so long the secret must she hide
It seemed to swell so big about her heart
That some word from her mouth must surely start
And since she dared to tell it to no man
Down to a marsh that lay hard by she ran
Till she came there her heart was all afire
And as a bittern booms in the quagmire
She laid her mouth low to the water down
"Betray me not you sounding water blown"
Said she "I tell it to none else but you
Long ears like asses has my husband two!
Now is my heart at ease since that is out

Read Ovid in his book does it appear
This knight my tale is chiefly told about
When what he went for he could not find out
That is the thing that women love the best
Most saddened was the spirit in his breast
But home he goes he could no more delay
The day was come when home he turned his way
And on his way it chanced that he should ride
In all his care beneath a forest's side

she
"That you will do whatever it may be
The thing I ask if it lie in your might
And I'll give you your answer ere the night"

Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growing up-on his heed two asses eres,
The whiche vyce he hidde, as he best mighte,
Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also,
He preyede hir, that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure
She swoor him "nay, for al this world to winne,
She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame"
But natheless, hir thoughte that she dyde,
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde,
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,
That nedely som word hir moste asterte,
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys faste by she ran,
Til she came there, hir herte was a fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth un to the water doun
"Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,"
Quod she "to thee I telle it, and namo,
Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute,
I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute,"
Heer may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde,
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere
This knight of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost,
But hoom he gooth he mighte nat sojourne
The day was come, that hoomward moste he tourne,
And in his wey it happed him to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest syde,
Wher as he saugh up-on a daunce go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo,
Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,
In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne
But certeinly, er he came fully there,
Vanisshed was this daunce, he niste where
No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a wyf,
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse
Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,
And seyde, "sir knight, heer forth ne lyth no wey
Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?
Paraventure it may the bettre be,
Thise olde folk can muchel thing," quod she
"My leve mooder," quod this knight certeyn,
"I nam but deed, but if that I can seyn
What thing it is that wommen most desyre,
Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte your hyre"
"Plight me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand," quod she,
"The nexte thing that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might,
And I wol telle it yow er it be night"

'Have heer my trouthe," quod the knight, "I grante"
"Thanne," quod she, I dar me wel avante,
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,
Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I
Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle,
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche,
Lat us go forth with-outen lenger speche "
Tho rouned she a pistel in his ere,

Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,
The quene hir self sittinge as a justyse,
Assembled been, his answere for to here,
And afterward this knight was bode appere

Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee

In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,
But seyden, he was worthy han his lyf
And with that word up sturte the olde wyf,
Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene
'Mercy, quod she, 'my sovereyn lady quene!
Er that your court departe, do me right
I taugh

For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf

That under erthe is grave, or lyth above,
But if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love "
'My love? ' quod he, nay, my dampnacioun!
Allas! that any of my nacioun
Sholde ever so foule disparaged be! '
But al for noght, the ende is this, that he
Constreyned was he nedes moste hir wedde,
And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde

Have here my word ' said he That thing I grant
Then said the crone of this I make my vaun
Your life is safe and I will stand thereby,
Upon my life the queen will say as I
Let s see which is the proudest of them all
That wears upon her hair kerchief or caul
Shall dare say no to that which I shall teach
Let us go now and without longer speech
Then whispered she a sentence in his ear
And bade him to be glad and have no fear
When they were come unto the court this knight
Said he had kept his promise as was right
And ready was his answer as he said
Full many a noble wife and many a maid
And many a widow since they are so wise
The queen herself sitting as high justice
Assembled were his answer there to hear
And then the knight was bidden to appear
Command was given for silence in the hall
And that the knight should tell before them all
What thing all worldly women love the best
This knight did not stand dumb as does a beast
But to this question presently answered
With manly voice so that the whole court heard
My liege lady generally said he
'Women desire to have the sovereignty
As well upon their husband as their love,
And to have mastery their man above

Whom he had seen a sitting on the green
Mercy cried she my sovereign lady queen!
Before the court s dismissed give me my right
Twas I who taught the answer to this knight
For which he did plight troth to me out there,
That the first thing I should of him require
He would do that if it lay in his might

That I so promised I will not protest

That from the earth is dug or lies above
Be aught except your wife and your true love
My love? cried he nay rather my da

Great was the woe the knight had in his thought
When he, with her, to marriage bed was brought;
He rolled about and turned him to and fro
His old wife lay there, always smiling so
And said "O my dear husband, *ben'cite!*
Fares every knight with wife as you with me?
Is this the custom in King Arthur's house?
Are knights of his all so fastidious?

And therewith of so low a race were born,
It's little wonder that I toss and turn
Would God my heart would break within my
breast!"
"Is this," asked she, "the cause of your
unrest?"
"Yes, truly," said he, "and no wonder 'tis."
"Now, sir," said she, "I could amend all
this,

Yet can they not bequeath, in anything,
To any of us, their virtuous living

Doth human worth mount up and so ordains
He Who bestows it; to Him it pertains "[1]

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That, for my necligence, I do no cure
To tellen yow the joye and al th'array
That at the feste was that ilke day.
To whiche thing shortly answere I shal,
I seye, ther nas no joye ne feste at al,
Ther nas but hevinesse and muche sorwe;
For prively he wedded hir on a morwe,
And al day after hidde him as an oule,
So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule
Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thoght,
Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-broght;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo,
And seyde, "o dere housbond, *ben'cite!*
Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?
Is every knight of his so dangerous?
I am your owene love and eek your wyf,
I am she, which that saved hath your lyf,
And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit;
What is my gilt? for godd's love, tel me it,
And it shal been amended, if I may."
"Amended?" quod this knight, "allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended never mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so old also,
And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,
That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and winde.
So wolde god myn herte wolde
breste!"
"Is this," quod she, "the cause of your un-
reste?"
"Ye, certainly," quod he, "no wonder is"
"Now, sure," quod she, "I coude amende al
this,
If that me liste, er it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighte bere yow un-to me.
But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And tak him for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,
Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.
For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,

That highte Dant, speken in this sentence;
Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale
'Ful selde up ryseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for god, of his goodnesse,
Wol that of him we clayme our gentillesse',[1]

[1]Dante, *Divine Comedy, Purgat*., VII, 122, 123

For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme
But temporel thing, that man may hurte and
mayme,
Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,
Pryvee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne
To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce,
They mighte do no vileinye or vyce
Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne,
Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde,
His office naturel ay wol it holde,
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye
Heer may ye see wel, how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possessioun,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde
For, god it woot, men may wel often finde
A lordes sone do shame and vileinye,
And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And *nil him* selven do no gentil dedis,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestre *that* deed is,
He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl,
For vileyns sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nis but renomee
Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh bountee,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone
Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone,
Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,
It was no-thing biquethe us with our place
Thenketh how noble, as seith *Valerius*,

For of our fathers may we nothing claim
But temporal things, that man may hurt and
maim
'And everyone knows this as well as I
If nobleness were implanted naturally
Within a certain lineage down the line
In private and in public, I opine,
The ways of gentleness they'd alway show
And never fall to vice and conduct low
Take fire and carry it in the darkest house
Between here and the Mount of Caucasus
And let men shut the doors and from them turn,
Yet will the fire as fairly blaze and burn
As twenty thousand men did it behold
Its nature and its office it will hold
On peril of my life until it die
From this you see that true gentility
Is not allied to wealth a man may own
Since folk do not their deeds, as may be shown,
As does the fire according to its kind
For God knows that men may full often find
A lord s son doing shame and villainy
And he that prizes his gentility
In being born of some old noble house
With ancestors both noble and virtuous
But will himself do naught of noble deeds
Nor follow him to whose name he succeeds,
He is not gentle be he duke or earl
For acting churlish makes a man a churl
Gentility is not just the renown
Of ancestors who have some greatness shown,
In which you have no portion of your own.
Your own gentility comes from God alone,
Thence comes our true nobility by grace,
It was not willed us with our rank and place
Think how noble as says Valerius,
Was that same Tullius Hostilius
Who out of poverty rose to high estate
Seneca and Boethius inculcate
Expressly (and no doubt it thus proceeds)
That he is noble who does noble deeds
And therefore husband dear I thus conclude
Although my ancestors mayhap were rude,
Yet may the High Lord and so hope I
Grant me the grace to live right virtuously
Then I ll be gentle when I do begin
To live in virtue and to do no sin
And when you me reproach for poverty,
The High God in Whom we believe say I
In voluntary poverty lived His life
And surely every man, or maid or wife
May understand that Jesus Heaven s King
Would not have chosen vileness of living
Glad poverty s an honest thing that s plain,
Which Seneca and other clerks maintain
Whoso will be content with poverty
I hold him rich though not a shirt has he
And he that covets much is a poor wight
For he would gain what s all beyond his might
But he that has not nor desires to have,
Is rich, although you hold him but a knave.
"True poverty [illegible]

Juvenal gaily says of poverty:
'The poor man, when he walks along the way,
Before the robbers he may sing and play.
Poverty's odious good, and, as I guess,
It is a stimulant to busyness,
A great improver, too, of sapience
In him that takes it all with due patience.
Poverty's this, though it seem misery—
Its quality may none dispute, say I
Poverty often, when a man is low,
Makes him his God and even himself to know
And poverty's an eye glass, seems to me,
Through which a man his loyal friends may see.
Since you've received no injury from me,
Then why reproach me for my poverty
"Now, sir, with age you have upbraided me,
[illegible]
And authors could I find for this, I guess
"Now since you say that I am foul and old,
Then fear you not to be made a cuckold,
For dirt and age, as prosperous I may be,
[illegible]
aye,
To have me foul and old until I die,
And be to you a true and humble wife,
[illegible]
"Then have I got of you the mastery,
[illegible]
And, save I be, at dawn, as fairly seen
As any lady, empress, or great queen
[illegible]
That she so very fair was, and young too,

Juvenal seith of povert merily·
'The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye.'
Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bringer out of bisinesse,
A greet amender eek of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience.
Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge·
Possessioun, that no wight wol chalenge.
Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his god and eek him-self to knowe.
Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.
And therefore, sire, sin that I noght yow greve,
Of my povert na-more ye me repreve
Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
[illegible]
Than drede you noght to been a cokewold,
For filthe and elde, al-so mote I thee,
Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee.
But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,
I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.
Chees now," quod she, "oon of thise thinges tweye,
To han me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And never yow displese in al my lyf,
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take your aventure of the repair
That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me,
Or in som other place, may wel be.
Now chees your-selven, whether that yow lyketh."
This knight avyseth him and sore syketh,
But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
"My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,
I put me in your wyse governance,
Cheseth your-self, which may be most plesance,
And most honour to yow and me also
I do no fors the whether of the two;
For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me."
"Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye," quod she,
"Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest?"
"Ye, certes, wyf," quod he, "I holde it best."
"Kis me," quod she, "we be no lenger wrothe;
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,
But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
As ever was wyf, sin that the world was newe.
And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene
As any lady, emperyce, or quene,
That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is "
And whan the knight saugh verraily al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,

For joye he hente hir in his armes two,
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse,
A thousand tyme a rewe he gan hir kisse
And she obeyed him in every thing
That mighte doon him plesance or lyking
  And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,
In parfit joye, and Jesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe a-bedde,
And grace t'overbyde hem that we wedde
And eek I preye Jesu shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves,
And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
God sende hem sone verray pestilence

For joy he clasped her in his strong arms two,
His heart bathed in a bath of utter bliss,
A thousand times all in a row, he d kiss.
And she obeyed his wish in everything
That might give pleasure to his love liking
  And thus they lived unto their lives' fair end,
In perfect joy, and Jesus to us send
Meek husbands, and young ones, and fresh in bed,
And good luck to outlive them that we wed
And I pray Jesus to cut short the lives
Of those who ll not be governed by their wives,
And old and querulous niggards with their pence,
And send them soon a mortal pestilence!

HERE ENDETH THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE FRIAR'S TALE

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made alwey a maner louring chere
Upon the Somnour, but *for* honestee
No vileyns word as yet to him spak he
But atte laste he seyde un to the Wyf,
"Dame," quod he, "god yeve yow right good lyf!
Ye han heer touched, al-so mote I thee,
In scole-matere greet difficultee,
Ye han seyd muchel thing right wel, I seye,
But dame, here as we ryden by the weye,
Us nedeth nat to speken but of game,
And lete auctoritees, *on* goddes name,
To preching and to scole eek of clergye.
But if it lyke to this companye,
I wol yow of a somnour telle a game
Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name,
That of a somnour may no good be sayd,
I praye that noon of you be yvel apayd
A somnour is a renner up and doun
With mandements for fornicacioun,
And is y-bet at every tounes ende "
  Our host tho spak, "a! sire, ye sholde be hende
And curteys, as a man of your estaat,
In companye we wol have no debaat
Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be "
  "Nay," quod the Somnour, "lat him seye to me
What so him list, whan it comth to my lot,
By god, I shal him quyten every grot
I shal him *tellen* which a greet honour
It is to be a flateringe limitour,[1]
And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis "
  Our host answerde, "pees, na-more of this "
And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
"Tel forth your tale, leve maister deere "

This worthy limiter this noble friar,
He turned *always a* lowering face and dire,
Upon the summoner, but for courtesy
No rude and insolent word as yet spoke he.
But at *the last* he said unto the wife
'Lady " said he, ' God *grant you a* good life!
You have here touched, as I may prosperous be,
Upon school matters of great difficulty,
You have said many things right well I say,
But lady, as we ride *along* our way,
We need but talk to carry on our game,
And leave authorities in good God s name,
To preachers and to schools for clergymen
But if it pleases all this company, then
I ll tell you of a *summoner, to* make game
By God, you could surmise it by the name
That of a summoner may no good be said,
I pray that no one will be angry made
A summoner is a runner up and down
With summonses for fornication known
And he is beaten well at each town s end "
  Our host then spoke ' O sir, you should attend
To *courtesy*, like *man* of your estate
In company here we will have no debate
Tell forth your tale and let the summoner be "
  Nay," said the summoner, let him say to me
What pleases him when *it* falls to my lot
By God I'll then repay him every jot
I ll then make plain to him what great honour
It is to be a flattering limiter,[1]
I ll certainly tell him what his business is "
  Our host replied ' Oh peace, no more of this!"
And after that he said unto the friar
  Tell now your tale to us, good master dear."

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE FRIAR

[1] *Skeat omits* Tyrwhitt s ll 6377–8

THE FRIAR'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE FRIAR'S TALE

Once on a time there dwelt in my country
An archdeacon, a man of high degree,
Who boldly executed the Church's frown
In punishment of fornication known,
And of witchcraft and of all known bawdry,
And defamation and adultery
Of church wardens, and of fake testaments
And contracts and the lack of sacraments,
And still of many another kind of crime
Which need not be recounted at this time,
And usury and simony also
But unto lechers gave he greatest woe;
They should lament if they were apprehended,
And payers of short tithes to shame descended
If any one informed of such, 'twas plain
He'd not escape pecuniary pain
For all short tithes and for small offering
He made folk pitifully to howl and sing.
For ere the bishop caught them with his crook,
They were already in the archdeacon's book
Then had he, by his competent jurisdiction,
Power to punish them by such infliction
[illegible]

He could protect of lechers one or two
[illegible]

They have of us no competent jurisdiction,
Nor ever shall for term of all their lives.
"Peter! So are the women of the dives,"
The summoner said, "likewise beyond my cure!"
"Peace, with mischance and with misadventure!"
Thus spoke our host, "and let him tell his tale
Now tell it on, despite the summoner's wail,
Nor spare in anything, my master dear "
This false thief, then, this summoner (said the friar)
Had always panders ready to his hand,
For any hawk to lure in all England,
Who told him all the scandal that they knew,
For their acquaintances were nothing new.
They were all his informers privily,
And he took to himself great gain thereby;
His master knew not how his profits ran
[illegible]

Whilom ther was dwellinge in my contree
An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree,
That boldely dide execucioun
In punisshinge of fornicacioun,
Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,
Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
And eek of many another maner cryme
Which nedeth nat reherceen at this tyme;
Of usure, and of symonye also.
But certes, lechours dide he grettest wo;
They sholde singen, if that they were hent;
And smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.
If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,
Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial peyne.
For smale tythes and for smal offringe
He made the peple pitously to singe.
For er the bisshop caughte hem with his hook,
They weren in the erchedeknes book.
Thanne hadde he, thurgh his jurisdiccioun,
Power to doon on hem correccioun.
He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
A slyer boy was noon in Engelond;
For subtilly he hadde his espiaille,
That taughte him, wher that him mighte availle.
He coude spare of lechours oon or two,
To techen him to foure and twenty mo
For thogh this Somnour wood were as an hare,
To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare,
For we been out of his correccioun;
They han of us no jurisdiccioun,
Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.
"Peter! so been the wommen of the styves,"
Quod the Somnour, "y-put out of my cure!"
"Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,"
Thus seyde our host, "and lat him telle his tale.
Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour gale,
Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister dere."
This false theef, this Somnour, quod the Frere,
Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauk to lure in Engelond,
That tolde him al the secree that they knewe,
For hir acqueyntance was nat come of newe.
They weren hise approwours prively;
He took him-self a greet profit therby;
His maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
With-outen mandement, a lewed man
[illegible]

And was a theef, right swich a theef was he;
His maister hadde but half his duetee

He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,
A theef and eek a Somnour, and a baude
He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,
That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere
Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent
And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,
And somne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pile the man, and lete the wenche go
Thanne wolde he seye, 'frend, I shal for thy sake
Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake,
Thee thar na more as in this cas travaille,
I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle'
Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo
Than possible is to telle in yeres two
For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,
That can an hurt deer from an hool y knowe,
Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
Or an avouter, or a paramour
And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,
Therefore on it he sette al his entente

a take!'
"Wel come," quod he, 'and every good felawe!
Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?
Seyde this yeman, wiltow fer to day?
This Somnour him answerde, and seyde, nay,
Heer faste by, quod he is myn entente
To ryden for to reysen up a rente
That longeth to my lordes duëtee'
Artow thanne a bailly?
Ye' quod he
He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
Seye that he was a somnour, for the name
Depardieux' quod this yeman dere
brother,

Everich in otheres hand his trouthe
leith,
For to be sworne bretheren til they deye
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye
This Somnour, which that was as ful of jangles,
As ful of venim been thise wariangles,
And ever enquering up-on every thing,

Better than this man knew a sly lecher,
Or fornicator or adulterer

Fe gning a cause for her he planned to strip
It happened that he saw before him ride
A yeoman gay along a forest s s de

Jack!

To r de sir to collect a bit of rent
Pertain ng to my lord s temporality
And are you then a bailiff?
Aye said he
He dared not no for very filth and shame
Say that he was a summoner for the name
In God s name, said this yeoman then dear
brother
You are a ba liff and I am another

All s ian oe you s jus as you may des re
Many thanks said this summoner by my
faith!
And they struck hands and made their solemn
oath

You'll never miss it . . .

"Now, brother," said this summoner, "I pray

. . . each me, while we ride along our way,

. . . one;

Sometimes like man, or som . . . e,
Or like an angel can I seem, you know
It is no wondrous thing that this is so,
A lousy juggler can deceive, you see,
And by gad, I have yet more craft than he."

"Why," asked the summoner, "ride you then, or go,

"Brother," quod he, "where is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I sholde yow seche?"
This yeman him answerde in softe speche,
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north contree,
Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee see.
Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse,
That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse."
"Now, brother," quod this Somnour, "I yow preye,
Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the weye,
Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,
Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully
. . . how I may most winne,

. . . e,

. . . e I,

. . . elle?

. . . ig

. . . t sey ye?

. . . we noon,

. . . thanne or goon

In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?"
'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swich formes make
As most able is our preyes for to take "
"What maketh yow to han al this labour?"
'Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,"
Seyde this feend,' but alle thing hath tyme
The day is short, and it is passed pryme,
And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day
I wol entende to winnen, if I may,
And nat entende our wittes to declare
For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare
To understonde, al thogh I tolde hem thee
But for thou axest why labouren we,
For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instruments,
And menes to don his comandements,
Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,
In divers art and in divers figures
With-outen him we have no might, certayn,
If that him list to stonden ther-agayn
And som tyme, at our prayere, han we leve
Only the body and nat the soule greve,
Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo
And som tyme han we might of bothe two,
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke
And somtyme be we suffred for to seke
Up-on a man, and doon his soule unreste,
And nat his body, and al is for the beste
Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,
It is a cause of his savacioun,
Al be it that it was nat our entente
He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde him hente
And som tyme be we servant un to man,
As to the erchebisshop Seint Dunstan
And to the apostles servant eek was I"
'Yet tel me," quod the Somnour, feithfully,
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway
Of elements?'
the feend answerde, 'nay;
Som tyme we feyne, and som tyme we aryse
With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse,
And speke as renably and faire and wel
As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he,
I do no fors of your divinitee
But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat jape,
Thou wolt algates wite how we ben shape,
Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother dere,
Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere
For thou shalt by thyn owene experience
Conne in a chayer rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgyle whyl he was on lyve,
Or Dant also, now lat us ryde blyve
For I wol holde companye with thee
Til it be so, that thou forsake me'
"Nay," quod this Somnour, 'that shal nat bityde,
I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde,
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas.
For though thou were the devel Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,
As I am sworn, and ech of us til other
For to be trewe brother in this cas,

In sundry shapes and not in one you know?'
Because, said he 'we will such figures make
As render likely that our prey we'll take'
What causes you to have all this labour?'
Full many a cause my dear sir summoner'
Replied the fiend but each thing has its time
The day is short and it is now past prime
And yet have I won not a thing this day
I will attend to winning if I may,
And not our different notions to declare
For brother mine, your wits are all too bare
To understand though *I told mine fully*
But since you ask me why thus labour we—
Well sometimes we are God's own instruments
And means to do His orders and intents,
When so He pleases upon all His creatures
In divers ways and shapes, and divers features.
Without Him we've no power 'tis certain
If He be pleased to stand against our train
And sometimes at our instance have we leave
Only the body not the soul to grieve
As witness Job to whom we gave such woe
And sometimes have we power of both you know,
That is to say of soul and body too
And sometimes we're allowed to search and do
That to a man which gives his soul unrest
And not his body and all is for the best
And when one does withstand all our temptation,
It is the thing that gives his soul salvation
Albeit that it was not our intent
He should be saved we'd have him impotent
And sometimes we are servants unto man
As to that old archbishop, Saint Dunstan
And to the apostles servant once was I
Yet tell me said the summoner faithfully,
Make you yourselves new bodies thus alway
Of elements?
The fiend replied thus Nay
Sometimes we feign them sometimes we arise
In bodies that are dead in sundry wise
And speak as reasonably and fair and well
As to the witch at En-dor Samuel
And yet some men maintain it was not he,
I do not care for your theology
But of one thing I warn nor will I jape
You shall in all ways learn our proper shape
You shall hereafter come my brother dear
Where you'll not need to ask of me as here
For you shall of your own experience
In a red chair have much more evidence
Than Virgil ever did while yet alive,
Or ever Dante now let's swiftly drive
For I will hold with you my company
Till it shall come to pass you part from me"
Nay said the other that shall not betide
I am a bailiff known both far and wide
My promise will I keep in this one case
For though you were the devil Sathanas
My troth will I preserve to my dear brother,
As I have sworn and each of us to other,
That we will be true brothers in this case,

And let us both about our business pace
Take your own part of what men will you give
And I will mine and thus may we both live
And if that either of us gets more than other
Let him be true and share it with his brother
Agreed then said the devil by my fay
And with that word they rode upon their way
As they drew near the town—it happened so—
To which this summoner had planned to go
They saw a cart that loaded was with hay
The which a carter drove along the way
Deep was the mire for which the cart now stood
The carter whipped and cried as madman would
Hi Badger Scot! What care you for the stones?
The Fiend he cried take body of you and bones
As utterly as ever you were foaled!

And near the fiend he drew as naught were there
And unobserved he whispered in his ear
Listen my brother listen by your faith
Hear you not what the carter says in wrath?
Take all at once for he has given you
Both hay and cart and his three horses too
Nay said the devil God knows, never a bit
It is not his intention trust to it
Ask him yourself if you believe not me
Or else withhold a while and you shall see
This carter stroked his nags upon the croup
And they began in collars low to stoop
Hi now! cried he May Jesus Christ you bless
And all His creatures greater aye and less!

lad?
Here may you see my very own dear brother
The peasant said one thing but thought another
Let us go forth upon our travellers way
Here win I nothing I can take today
When they had come a little out of town

God save you master what is your sweet will?
I have, said he, a summons here a bill,

And bothe we goon abouten our purchas
Tak thou thy part, what that men wol thee yive,
And I shal myn, thus may we bothe live
And if that any of us have more than other,
Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his brother"
"I graunte," quod the devel, "by my fey"
And with that word they ryden forth hir wey
And right at the entring of the tounes ende,
To which this Somnour shoop him for to wende,
They saugh a cart, that charged was with hey,
Which that a carter droof forth in his wey
Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood
The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,
'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for the stones?
The feend," quod he, "yow fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever were ye foled!
So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!
The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!'
This Somnour seyde, 'heer shal we have a pley;"
And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne were,
Ful prively, and rouned in his ere
'Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy feith,
Her-stow nat how that the carter seith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples three"
"Nay,' quod the devel,' god wot, never a deel,
It is nat his entente, trust me weel
Axe him thy self, if thou nat trowest me,
Or elles stint a while, and thou shalt see"
This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they bigonne drawen and to-stoupe,
'Heyt, now!' quod he,' ther Jesu Crist yow blesse,
And al his handwerk, bothe more and lesse!
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!
I pray god save thee and seynt Loy!
Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!'
Lo! brother," quod the feend, "what tolde I thee?
Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,
The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte another
Lat us go forth abouten our viage,
Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage"
Whan that they comen som-what out of toune,
This Somnour to his brother gan to roune,
'Brother," quod he,' heer woneth an old rebekke,
That hadde almost as lief to lese hir nekke
As for to yeve a peny of hir good
I wol han twelf pens, though that she be wood,
Or I wol sompne hir un to our offyce,
And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no vyce
But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,
Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of me"
This Somnour clappeth at the widwes gate
'Com out," quod he, thou olde viritrate!
I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee!'
'Who clappeth?' seyde this widwe,' *ben'cite!*
God save you, sire, what is your swete wille?'
"I have," quod he, "of somonce here a bille,

Up peyne of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee
T'answere to the court of certeyn thinges "
"Now, lord," quod she, "Crist Jesu, king of kinges,
So wisly helpe me, as I ne may
I have been syk, and that ful many a day
I may nat go so fer," quod she, "ne ryde,
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.
May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour,
And answere there, by my procutour,
To swich thing as men wol opposen me?"
"Yis," quod this Somnour, "pay anon, lat se,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquyte
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte,
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.
Com of, and lat me ryden hastily,
Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie "
"Twelf pens," quod she, "now lady Seinte Marie

Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche "
"Nay than," quod he, "the foule feend me fecche
If I th'excuse, though thou shul be spilt!"
"Alas," quod she, "god woot, I have no gilt "
"Pay me," quod he, "or by the swete seinte Anne,
As I wol bere awey thy newe panne
For dette, which that thou owest me of old,
Whan that thou madest thyn housbond cokewold,
I payde at hoom for thy correccioun "
"Thou lixt," quod she, "by my savacioun!
Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,

deye,
And panne and al, but he wol him repente!"

wrooth,
Thy body and this panne ben myne by right.
Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our privetee
More than a maister of divinitee"
And with that word this foule feend him hente,
Body and soule, he with the devel wente
Wher-as that somnours han hir heritage.
And god, that maked after his image

On pain of excommunication be

So truly keep me as I cannot; nay,
I have been sick, and that for many a day
I cannot walk so far," said she, "nor ride,

Twelvepence to me, and I'll have you acquitted
Small profit there for me, be it admitted,
My master gets the profit, and not I
Come then, and let me ride on, speedily,
Give me twelvepence, I may no longer tarry "
Twelvepence! ' cried she, "Our Lady Holy Mary

fetch
If I excuse you, though your life be spilt! '
"Alas! "cried she, ' God knows I have no guilt!"
"Pay me," he cried, "or by the sweet Saint Anne
I'll take away with me your brand new pan
For debt that you have owed to me of old,
When you did make your husband a cuckold,
I paid at home that fine to save citation "
"You lie " she cried then, ' by my own salvation!
Never was I, till now, widow or wife,

today,

goes,
Your body and this pan are mine by right

Mankind, *now save and guide us*, all and some
And grant that summoners good men become!

Masters, I could have told you, said this friar
Were I not pestered by this summoner dire,
After the texts of Christ and Paul and John
And of our other doctors, many a one,
Such torments that your hearts would shake with dread
Albeit by no tongue can half be said,
Although I might a thousand winters tell,
Of pains in that same cursed house of Hell.
But all to keep us from that horrid place,
Watch, and pray Jesus for His holy grace
And so reject the tempter Sathanas.
Hearken this word, be warned by this one case:
The lion lies in wait by night and day
To slay the innocent, if he but may.
Dispose *your hearts in grace*, that you withstand
The Fiend, who'd make you thrall among his band.
He cannot tempt more than beyond your might,
For Christ will be your champion and knight.
And pray that all these summoners repent
Of their misdeeds, before the Fiend torment.

Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and some,
And leve this Somnour good man to bicome!

Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod this Frere,
Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour here,
After the text of Crist [and] Poul and John,
And of our othere doctours many oon,
Swiche peynes, that your hertes mighte agryse,
Al be-it so, no tonge may devyse,
Thogh that I mighte a thousand winter telle,
The peyne of thilke cursed hous of helle.
But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
Waketh, and preyeth Jesu for his grace
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herketh this word, beth war as in this cas,
The leoun sit in his await alway
To slee the innocent, if that he may.
Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde
The feend, that yow wolde make thral and bonde.
He may nat tempten yow over your might;
For Crist wol be your champion and knight.
And prayeth that thise Somnours hem repente
Of hir misdedes, er that the feend hem hente.

HERE ENDETH THE FRIAR'S TALE

THE SUMMONER'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE SUMMONER'S TALE

High in his stirrups then the summoner stood,
Against the friar his heart, as madman's would,
Shook like a very aspen leaf for ire.
"Masters," said he, "but one thing I desire;
I beg of you that, of your courtesy,
Since you have heard this treacherous friar lie,
You suffer it that I my tale may tell!
This friar he boasts he knows somewhat of Hell,
And God He knows that it is little wonder;
Friars and fiends are never far asunder.
For, by gad, you have *oftentimes heard tell*
How such a friar was snatched down into Hell
In spirit, once, and by a *vision blown*;
And as an angel led him up and down,
To show the pains and torments that there were,
In all the place he saw no friar there.
Of other folk he saw enough in woe;
And to the angel then he questioned so:
"Now sir," said he, "have friars such a grace
That none of them shall come into this place?"
"Nay," said the angel, "millions here are thrown!"
And unto Sathanas he led him down.
"And now has Sathanas," said he, "a tail
Broader than of a galleon is the sail.
Hold up thy tail, thou Sathanas!" said he,
"*Show forth thine arse and let the friar see*
Where is the nest of friars in this place!"
And ere one might go half a furlong's space,
Just as the bees come swarming from a hive,

This Somnour in his stiropes hye stood,
Up-on this Frere his herte was so wood,
That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.
'Lordinges,' quod he, 'but o thing I desyre;
I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,
Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye,
As suffereth me I may my tale telle!
This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
And god it woot, that it is litel wonder;
Freres and feendes been but lyte a-sonder.
For pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd telle,
How that a frere ravisshed was to helle
In spirit ones by a visioun;
And as an angel ladde him up and doun,
To shewen him *the peynes* that ther were,
In al the place saugh he nat a frere;
Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.
Un-to this angel spak the frere tho:
'Now, sir,' quod he, 'han freres swich a grace
That noon of hem shal come to this place?'
'Yis,' quod this angel, 'many a millioun!'
And un-to Sathanas he ladde him doun.
'And now hath Sathanas,' seith he, 'a tayl
Brodder than of a carrik is the sayl.
Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas!' quod he,
'Shewe *forth thyn ers, and lat the frere see*
Wher is the nest of freres in this place!'
And, er that half a furlong-wey of space,
Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve,

Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve
Twenty thousand freres in a route,
And thurgh out helle swarmeden aboute

Upon the torments of this sory place,
His spirit god restored of his grace
Un to his body agayn, and he awook,

My prologue ends thus to my tale give ear
OF THE SUMMONER'S TALE

THE SUMMONER'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE SUMMONER HIS TALE

Lordinges, ther is in Yorkshire as I gesse,
A mersshy contree called Holdernesse,
In which ther wente a limitour aboute,
To preche and eek to begge it is no doute

Wher with men mighten holy houses make,
Ther as dyvyne service is honoured,
Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured,
Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yive,
As to possess oners, that mowen live
Thanked be god, in wele and habundaunce
"Trentals[1] seyde he, ' deliveren fro penaunce
Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,

Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem leste,
He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he reste,
With scrippe and tipped staf y tukked hye,

And a poyntel polisshed fetisly,
And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,
Of alle folk that yaf him any good,

Masters there is in Yorkshire as I guess
A marshy region that's called Holderness
Wherein there went a limiter about

The means wherewith men might new churches make
That there the services of God might flower
And not to them who waste and wealth devour
Nor where there's no necessity to give

Yea even when they have been hastily sung
Not that I hold as frivolous and gay
A priest who only sings one mass a day
Act quickly now sa d he their souls redeem
For hard it is with spikes and hooks I deem
To be so torn aye or to burn or bake
Now speed you all to this for Christ's own sake!
And when this friar had sa d all that he meant
W th *qui cum patre* on his way he went
When folk in church had given at his behest
He went his way no longer would he rest
With scrip and ferruled staff and skirts tucked high
In every house he went to peer and pry
And beg for flour and cheese or else for corn
His fellow had a staff was tipped with horn
A set of tablets all of ivory
And stylus that was polished elegantly
And wrote the names down always as he stood
Of those that gave him anything of good

[1] Series of thirty Masses for the dead.

And I rose up and did my brothers seek
With many a tear down trickling on my cheek,
And without noise or clashing of the bells,
Te deum was our song and nothing else,
Save that to Christ I said an orison
And thanked Him for the vision he had shown
For sir and dame trust me full well in all
Our orisons are more effectual
And more we see of Christ's own secret things
Than folk of the laity though they were kings
We live in poverty and abstinence
And laymen live in riches and expense
Of meat and drink and in their gross delight
This world's desires we hold in great despite
Dives and Lazarus lived differently
And different recompense they had thereby
Whoso would pray he must fast and be clean,
Fatten his soul and keep his body lean
We fare as says the apostle clothes and food
Suffice us though they be not over good
The cleanness and the fasting of us friars
Result in Christ's accepting all our prayers
Lo Moses forty days and forty nights
Fasted before the mightiest God of mights
Spoke with him on the Mountain of Sinai
With empty belly fasting long say I
Received he there the law that had been writ
By God's hand and Elias (you know of it)
On Mount Horeb ere he had any speech
With the High God Who is our spirit's leech
He fasted long and deep his contemplation
Aaron who ruled the temple of his nation
And all the other great priests every one
When they into the temple would be gone
To pray there for the folk and do their rites
They would not drink of that which man excites
And makes him drunk or stirs in any way
But there in abstinence they'd watch and pray
Lest they should die—to what I say take heed!—
Were they not sober when they prayed indeed
Beware my words No more! for it suffices.
Our Lord Christ as the holy writ apprises,
Gave us example of fasting and of prayers
Therefore we mendicants we simple friars,
Are sworn to poverty and continence,
To charity meekness and abstinence
To persecution for our righteousness,
To weeping pity and to cleanliness
And therefore may you see that all our prayers—
I speak of us we mendicants we friars—
Are to the High God far more acceptable
Than yours with all the feasts you make at table
From Paradise if I am not to lie
Was man chased out because of gluttony
And chaste was man in Paradise that's plain
But hear now, Thomas lest I speak in vain
I have no text for it I must admit,
But by analogy the words will fit
That specially our sweet Lord Christ Jesus
Spoke of the begging friars when He said thus
Blest are the poor in spirit So said He
And so through all the gospel may you see

And up I roos, and al our covent eke,
With many a tere trikling on my cheke,
Withouten noyse or claterynge of belles,
Te deum was our song and no-thing elles,
Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
Thankinge him of his revelacioun
For sir and dame, trusteth me right weel,
Our orisons been more effectueel,
And more we seen of Cristes secree thinges
Than burel folk, al though they weren kinges.
We live in povert and in abstinence,
And burel folk in richesse and despence
Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul delyt
We han this worldes lust al in despyt
Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,
And diverse guerdon hadden they ther-by.
Who-so wol preye, he moot faste and be clene,
And fatte his soule and make his body lene.
We fare as seith th'apostle, cloth and fode
Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode
The clennesse and the fastinge of us freres
Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyeres
Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty night
Fasted, er that the heighe god of might
Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay
With empty wombe, fastinge many a day,
Receyved he the lawe that was writen
With goddes finger, and Elie, wel ye witen,
In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche
With hye god, that is our lyves leche,
He fasted longe and was in contemplaunce
Aaron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,
And eek the othere preestes everichon,
In to the temple whan they sholde gon
To preye for the peple, and do servyse,
They nolden drinken, in no maner wyse,
No drinke, which that mighte hem dronke make,
But there in abstinence preye and wake,
Lest that they deyden, tak heed what I seye
But they be sobre that for the peple preye,
War that I seye, namore! for it suffyseth
Our lord Jesu, as holy writ devyseth,
Yaf us ensample of fastinge, and preyeres
Therfor we mendinants, we sely freres,
Been wedded to poverte and continence,
To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,
To persecucion for rightwisnesse,
To wepinge, misericorde, and clennesse
And therfor may ye see that our preyeres—
I speke of us, we mendinants, we freres—
Ben to the hye god more acceptable
Than youres, with your festes at the table
Fro Paradys first, if I shal nat lye,
Was man out chaced for his glotonye,
And chaast was man in Paradys, certeyn
But herkne now, Thomas, what I shal seyn.
I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shall finde it in a maner glose,
That specially our swete lord Jesus
Spak this by freres, whan he seyde thus
"Blessed be they that povre in spirit been."
And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,

Wher t be lyker our profess oun
Or hirs that swimmen in possess oun
Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye!
And for hir lewednesse I hem diffye
Me thinketh they ben lyk Jovinian
Fat as a whale and walkinge as a swan
Al vinolent as botel in the spence
Hir preyer is of ful gret reverence
Whan they for soules seye the psalm of Davit,
Lo buf! they seye *cor meum eructavit*
Who folweth Cristes gospel and his fore
But we that humble been and chast and pore,
Werkers of goddes word not auditours?
Therfore right as an hauk up at a sours
Up springeth in to their right so prayeres

In our chap tre praye we day and night
To Crist that he thee sende hele and might
Thy body for to welden hastily
God woot quod he no-thing ther-of fele I
As help me Crist as I in fewe yeres
Han spended up on dyvers maner freres

What nedeth yow diverse freres seche?
What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
To sechen othere leches n the toun?
Your inconstance is your confus oun
Holde ye than me or elles our covent
To praye for yow ben insufficient?
Thomas that jape his nat worth a myte
Your maladye s for we han to lyte
Al yif that covent half a quarter otes!

u mcnue deve se youi ne e a y ,
And chyden heer this sely innocent
Your wyf that is so meke and pacient
And therfor Thomas trowe me f thee leste
Ne stryve nat with thy wyf as for thy beste

Whether the Word fit better our profess on
Or theirs the monks who sw m in r ch possess on

And doers of God s Wo d not heare s merely?
As falcons r se to heaven just so clea ly

Were you not brother to us, you d not thr ve!

So help me Ch st as I these last fe v years

A th ng n ts nteg ty d plays
Fa g eater s reng h than does a un t scattered

And bear this word away now, by your faith,
Touching this thing, lo what the wise man saith:
'Within thy house do not the lion play,
Oppress thy subjects in no kind of way,
Nor cause thine equals and thy friends to flee'
And Thomas, yet again I charge you, be
Wary of her that in your bosom sleeps,
Beware the serpent that so slyly creeps

wives
Now, since you have so holy and meek a wife,
Why need you, Thomas, so to stir up strife?
There is, indeed, no serpent so cruel,
When man treads on his tail, nor half so fell,

And it is sure destruction unto one.
This every vulgar vicar or parson

It is great harm and truly great pity

And as Dame Fortune willed it, it was so
That one of them came home, and one did not.

It happened, as they went along their way,
Toward the place where he must die that day,
They met the knight that men had thought was dead
Then thought they, it were best not go ahead,
And so led both unto the judge again
They said 'O lord, this knight, he has not slain
His fellow, for he stands here sound, alive'
'You shall die then,' he cried, 'so may I thrive!
That is to say, you shall all die, all three!'
And then to the first knight 'twas thus said he
'I doomed you, and therefore you must be dead

Who loved all moral virtue, we are told,
Said on a day, when they were talking, thus:

And ber this word awey now, by thy feith,
Touchinge this thing, lo, what the wyse seith:
'With-in thyn hous ne be thou no leoun;
To thy subgits do noon oppressioun,
Ne make thyne aqueyntances nat to flee.'
And Thomas, yet eft-sones I charge thee,
Be war from hir that in thy bosom slepeth;
War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth
Under the gras, and stingeth subtilly.
Be war, my sone, and herkne paciently,
That twenty thousand men han lost hir lyves,
For stryving with hir lemmans and hir
wyves
Now sith ye han so holy and meke a wyf,
What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken stryf?
Ther nis, y-wis, no serpent so cruel,
Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so fel,
As womman is, whan she hath caught an ire;
Vengeance is thanne al that they desyre.
Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of sevene,
Abhominable un-to the god of hevene;
And to him-self it is destruccion.
This every lewed viker or person
Can seye, how Ire engendreth homicyde.
Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde.
I coude of Ire seye so muche sorwe,
My tale sholde laste til to-morwe.
And therfor preye I god bothe day and night,
An irous man, god sende him litel might!
It is greet harm and, certes, gret pitee,
To sette an irous man in heigh degree.
Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
As seith Senek, that, duringe his estaat,
Up-on a day out riden knightes two,
And as fortune wolde that were so,
That oon of hem cam hoom, that other noght.
Anon the knight bifore the juge is broght,
That seyde thus, 'thou hast thy felawe slayn.
For which I deme thee to the deeth, certayn.'

The knight cam, which men wenden had be deed.
Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste reed,
To lede hem bothe to the juge agayn
They seiden, 'lord, the knight ne hath nat slayn
His felawe, here he standeth hool alyve.'
'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I thryve!
That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and three!'
And to the firste knight right thus spak he,
'I dampned thee, thou most algate be deed.
And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed,
For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.'
And to the thridde knight right thus he seyth,
'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee'
And thus he dide don sleen hem alle three.
Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.
And so bifel, a lord of his meynee,
That lovede vertuous moralitee,
Seyde on a day bitwix hem two right thus:

'A lord is lost, if he be vicious,
And dronkenesse is eek a foul record
Of any man, and namely in a lord
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
Awaiting on a lord, and he noot where
For goddes love, drink more attemprely,
Wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly
His minde, and eek his limes everichon '
'The revers shalt thou see,' quod he, 'anon,
And preve it, by thyn owene experience,
That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich offence
Ther is no wyn bireveth me my might
Of hand ne foot, ne of myn eyen sight'—
And, for despyt, he drank ful muchel more
An hondred part than he had doon bifore,
And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche
Leet this knightes sone bifore him fecche,
Comandinge him he sholde bifore him stonde
And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde,
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he slow the child right there
'Now whether have I a siker hand or noon?
Quod he, 'is al my might and minde agoon?
Hath wyn bireved me myn eyen sight?
What sholde I telle th answere of the knight?
His sone was slayn, ther is na more to seye
Beth war therfor with lordes how ye pleye
Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal, if I can,
But if it be un to a povre man
To a povre man men sholde hise vyces telle,
But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to helle
Lo irous Cirus, thilke Percien,
How he destroyed the river of Gysen,
For that an hors of his was dreynt therinne,
Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne
He made that the river was so smal,
That wommen mighte wade it over al
Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can?
'Ne be no felawe to an irous man,
Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,
Lest thee repente', ther is na more to seye
Now Thomas, leve brother, lef thyn ire,
Thou shalt me finde as just as is a squire
Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn herte,
Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte,
But shewe to me al thy confessioun '
"Nay," quod the syke man, 'by Seint Simoun!
I have be shriven this day at my curat,
I have him told al hoolly myn estat,
Nedeth na more to speke of it, seith he,
' But if me list of myn humilitee
' Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make our
cloistre,"
Quod he,' for many a muscle and many an oistre,
Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse,
Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to reyse
And yet, god woot, unnethe the fundement
Parfourned is, ne of our pavement
Nis nat a tyle yet with inne our wones,
By god, we owen fourty pound for stones!
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle!
For elles moste we our bokes selle

A lord is lost if he be too vicious,
And drunkenness is foul thing to record
Of any man and specially of a lord
There is full many an eye and many an ear
Waiting upon a lord nor knows he where
For God s dear love sir, drink more moderately,
Wine causes man to lose and wretchedly
His mind and his limbs' usage every one '
' The opposite you ll see said he anon
And you ll prove by your own experience
That wine does not to men such foul offence
There is no wine can rob me of my might
Of hand or foot nor yet of my eyesight!
And for despite he drank much wine the more,
A hundred times than he had drunk before,
And then anon this ireful wicked wretch
Sent one this knight s young son to go and fetch,
And ordered that before him he should stand
And suddenly he took his bow in hand
And drew the string thereof up to his ear
And with an arrow slew the child right there
Now tell me whether I ve sure hand or none!
He said And are my *might and mind all gone?*
Has wine deprived me of my good eyesight?
How shall I tell the answer of the knight?
His son was slain there is no more to say
Beware therefore with lords look how you play
But sing *placebo* and I shall if I can
Unless it be unto a helpless man
To a poor man men should his vices tell
But to a lord no, though he go to Hell
Lo ireful Cyrus that great Persian king
Destroyed the river Gyndes at its spring
Because a horse of his was drowned therein
When he went forth old Babylon to win
He caused the river to become so small
That women could go wading through it all
Lo, what said he whose teaching all commend?
An angry man take never for a friend
Nor with a madman walk along the way
Lest you repent There is no more to say
Now Thomas my dear brother leave your ire
You shall find me as just as is a squire
Hold not the Devil s knife against your heart
Your anger does too sorely burn and smart
But show me all now in confession son
Nay said the sick man by Saint Simeon!
I have been shriven today by my curate
I have him told the whole truth of my state
There s no more need to speak of it said he
Save as I please, of my humility
Then give me of your gold to build our
cloister '
Said he for many a mussel and an oyster
When other men have been well at their ease
Have been our food that building should not cease,
And yet God knows is finished nothing more
Than the foundation while of all the floor
There s not a tile yet laid to call our own
By God we owe full forty pounds for stone!
Now help, Thomas, for Him that harried Hell!
Else must we turn about and our books sell.

And if you laymen lack our high instruction
Then will the world go all to its destruction
For whoso shall deny us right to live
So may God save me, Thomas, by your leave,
He'll have deprived the whole world of the sun
For who can teach and work as we have done?
And that's not been for little time said he,
Elias and Elisha used to be
Friars, you'll find the scriptures do record
And beggars too, thanks be to the good Lord!
Now Thomas, help for holy charity!
And down he went then kneeling on one knee
This sick man he went well nigh mad for ire,
He would have had that friar set alive
For the hypocrisy that he had shown
Such things as I possess and are my own
Said he those may I give you and no other
You tell me that I am as your own brother?'
Yea truly said the friar trust me well
I gave your wife a letter with our seal
That's well' said he, and something will I give
Unto your holy convent while I live.
And right anon you'll have it in your hand
On this condition only understand
That you divide it so, my own dear brother
That every friar shall have as much as other
This shall you swear upon the faith you own,
And without fraud or cavil be it known
I swear it said this friar on my faith!'
And on the sick man's laid his hand therewith
Lo hear my oath! In me shall truth not lack
Now then come put your hand right down my back
Replied this man and grope you well behind
For underneath my buttocks shall you find
A thing that I have hid in privity
Ah thought the friar this shall go with me!
And down he thrust his hand right to the cleft
In hope that he should find there some good gift
And when the sick man felt the friar here
Groping about his hole and all his rear
Into his hand he let the friar a fart
There is no stallion drawing loaded cart
That might have let a fart of such a sound
The friar leaped up as with wild lion's bound
'Ah treacherous churl, he cried, by God's own bones
I'll see that he who scorns me thus atones
You'll suffer for this fart—I'll find a way!'
The servants who had heard all this affray,
Came leaping in and chased the friar out
And forth he scowling went with angry shout
And found his fellow where he'd left his store
He glared about as he were some wild boar
He ground and gnashed his teeth so wroth was he
He quickly sought the manor there to see
The lord thereof whose honour was the best,
And always to the friar he confessed
This worthy man was lord of that village
The friar came as he were in a rage
Where sat the lord at dinner at his board

And if ye lakke our predicacioun,
Than gooth the world al to destruccioun
For who-so wolde us fro this world bireve,
So god me save, Thomas, by your leve,
He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne
For who can teche and werchen as we conne?
And that is nat of litel tyme," quod he;
'But sith that Elie was, or Elisee,
Han freres been, that finde I of record,
In charitee, y thanked be our lord
Now Thomas, help, for seinte Charitee!"
And doun anon he sette him on his knee.
This syke man wex wel ny wood for ire,
He wolde that the frere had been on fire
With his false dissimulacioun
'Swich thing as is in my possessioun,"
Quod he, 'that may I yeven, and non other
Ye sey me thus, how that I am your brother?'
'Ye, certes," quod the frere, "trusteth weel,
I took our dame our lettre with our seel"
'Now wel," quod he, "and som what shal I yive
Un to your holy covent whyl I live,
And in thyn hand thou shalt it have anoon,
On this condicioun, and other noon,
That thou departe it so, my dere brother,
That every frere have also muche as other
This shaltou swere on thy professioun,
With-outen fraude or cavillacioun"
"I swere it," quod this frere, 'upon my feith!'
And ther-with al his hand in his he leith.
'Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak."
'Now thanne, put thyn hand doun by my bak,"
Seyde this man, 'and grope wel bihinde,
Bynethe my buttok ther shaltow finde
A thing that I have hid in privetee"
"A!' thoghte this frere, "this shal go with me!"
And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifte,
In hope for to finde ther a yifte
And whan this syke man felte this frere
Aboute his tuwel grope there and here,
Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart
Ther nis no capul, drawinge in a cart,
That mighte have lete a fart of swich a soun
The frere up stirte as doth a wood leoun.
"A! false cherl," quod he, for goddes bones,
This hastow for despyt doon for the nones!
Thou shalt abye this fart, if that I may!"
His meynee, whiche that herden this affray,
Cam lepinge in, and chaced out the frere,
And forth he gooth, with a ful angry chere,
And fette his felawe ther as lay his stoor
He looked as it were a wilde boor,
He grinte with his teeth, so was he wrooth
A sturdy pas doun to the court he gooth,
Wher as ther woned a man of greet honour,
To whom that he was alwey confessour,
This worthy man was lord of that village
This frere cam, as he were in a rage,
Wher-as this lord sat eting at his bord

Unnethes mighte the frere speke a word,
Til atte laste he seyde "god yow see!"
This lord gan loke, and seide, "*ben'cite!*
What, frere John, what maner world is this?
I see wel that som thing ther is amis
Ye loken as the wode were ful of thevis,
Sit doun anon, and tel me what your greef is,
And it shal been amended, if I may"
"I have," quod he, "had a despyt this day,
God yelde yow! adoun in your village,
That in this world is noon so povre a page,
That he nolde have abhominacioun
Of that I have receyved in your toun

"No maister, sire, ' quod he, "but servitour,
Thogh I have had in scole swich honour
God lyketh nat that 'Raby' men us calle,
Neither in market ne in your large halle"
' No fors," quod he, ' but tel me al your grief"
' Sire," quod this frere, "an odious meschief
This day bitid is to myn ordre and me,
And so *per consequens* to ech degree
Of holy chirche, god amende it sone!"
' Sir," quod the lord, "ye woot what is to done
Distempre yow noght, ye be my confessour,
Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour
For goddes love your pacience ye holde,
Tel me your grief"
and he anon him tolde,
As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.
The lady of the hous ay stille sat,
Til she had herd al what the frere sayde
"Ey, goddes moder," quod she, ' blisful mayde!
Is ther oght elles? telle me feithfully '
' Madame," quod he, ' how thinketh yow her by? '
' How that me thinketh?" quod she, "so god me speede,
I seye, a cherl hath doon a cherles dede

But I on other weyes may be wreke,
I shal diffame him over al ther I speke,
This false blasphemour, that charged me
To parte that wol nat departed be,
To every man y liche, with meschaunce! '
The lord sat stille as he were in a traunce,
And in his herte he rolled up and doun,
' How hadde this cherl imaginacioun
To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?
Never erst er now herde I of swich matere,
I trowe the devel putte it in his minde
In ars metryke shal ther no man finde,
Biforn this day, of swich a questioun
Who sholde make a demonstracioun,
That every man sholde have y liche his part
As of the soun or savour of a fart?

May God reward you!—down in your village

Was this day done to my order and me,
And so *per consequens* to each degree
Of Holy Church may God it soon amend! '
Sir said the lord, the story I attend
As my confessor pray your wrath control
Salt of the earth are you—the savour whole
For love of God I beg you patience hold
Tell me your grievance "
And anon he to'd
As you have heard before you know well what
The lady of the house right silent sat
Till she had heard all that the friar said
Eh by God s Mother cried she Blessed Maid!
Is there aught else? A point that we did miss?
Madam asked he what do you think of this?
What do I think? ' she asked So God me speed
I say a churl has done a churlish deed
What should I say? May God desert him! See—
Why his sick head is full of vanity
The man no doubt is more or less insane '
Madam said he I will not lie or feign
If otherwise I cannot vengeance wreak,
I will defame him wheresoe er I speak

Who could be able now to make it known
How every man should have an equal part
Of both the sound and savour of a fart?

O scrupulous proud churl beshrew his face!
Lo sirs this lord said then, with hard grimace,
Who ever heard of such a thing ere now?
To every man alike? But tell me how!
Why it s impossible it cannot be!
Exacting churl *God give him never glee!*
The rumbling of a fart and every sound,
Is but the air s reverberation round
And ever it wastes by little and little away
There is no man can judge aye by my fay
Whether it were divided equally
Behold my churl! And yet how cursedly
To my confessor has he made this *crack*!
I hold him surely a demoniac!
Now eat your meat and let the churl go play,
Let him go hang himself the devil s way!
Now the lord s squire stood ready near the board
To carve his meat and he heard word for word
All of the things that I to you have said
My lord *said he* be not ill pleased indeed
For I could tell for cloth to make a *gown*
To you sir friar so you do not frown
How this said fart evenly doled could be
Among your fellows if the thing pleased me
Tell said the lord and you shall have anon
Cloth for a gown by God and by Saint John!
My lord, said he when next the weather s fair
And there s no wind to stir the quiet air
Let someone bring a cartwheel to this hall
But see *there are* no missing spokes at all
Twelve spokes a cartwheel has *sir* commonly
And bring me then twelve friars and know you why?
Because a convent s thirteen *as I guess*
The present confessor for his worthiness
He shall complete the tale of this convent
Then shall they all kneel down by one assent
And at each spoke s end in this manner site,
Let the nose be laid *firmly* of a friar
Your noble sir confessor whom God save
Shall hold his nose upright beneath the nave
Then shall this churl with belly stiff and taut
As any tabour—let him here be brought
And set him on the wheel of this same cart
Upon the hub and make him let a *fart*
And you shall see on peril of my life
With proof so clear that there shall be no strife,
That equally the sound of it will wend
And the stink too to each spoke s utter end
Save that this worthy man your confessor
Because he is a man of great honour
Shall have first *fruits*, as reasonable it is
The noble custom of all friars is this
The worthy men of them shall be first served
And certainly this has he well deserved
He has today taught us so much of good
With preaching in the pulpit where he stood
That for my part I gladly should agree
He might well have the first smell of farts three,
And so would all his convent generously,
He bears himself so well and holily

O nyce proude cherl, I shrewe his face!
Lo, sires," quod the lord, with harde grace,
"Who ever herde of swich a thing er now?
To every man y lyke? tel me how
It is an inpossible, it may nat be!
Ey, nyce cherl, god lete him never thee!
The rumblinge of a fart, and every soun,
Nis but of eir reverberacioun,
And ever it wasteth lyte and lyte awey
Ther is no man can demen, by *my fey*,
If that it were departed equally
What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly
Un to my confessour to-day he spak!
I holde him certeyn a demoniak!
Now ete your mete, and lat the cherl go pleye,
Lat him go honge himself, a devel weye!'
Now stood the lordes squyer at *the* bord,
That carf his mete, and herde, word by word,
Of alle thinges of which I have yow sayd
"My lord,' quod he,' be ye nat yvel apayd,
I coude telle, for a goune-clooth,
To yow, sir frere, so ye be nat wrooth,
How that this fart sholde even deled be
Among your covent, if it lyked me"
Tel,' quod the lord,' and thou shalt have anon
A goune-cloth, by god and by Seint John!'
"My lord,' quod he, "whan *that* the weder is fair,
With-outen wind or perturbinge of air,
Lat bringe a cartwheel here in to this halle,
But loke that it have his spokes alle
Twelf spokes hath a cartwheel comunly
And bring me than twelf freres, woot ye why?
For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse
The confessour heer, for his worthinesse,
Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent
Than shal they knele doun, by *oon* assent,
And to every spokes ende, in this manere,
Ful sadly *leye his nose* shal a frere
Your noble *confessour*, ther god him save,
Shal holde his nose upright, under the nave
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and toght
As any tabour, *hider been y broght*,
And sette him on the wheel right of this cart,
Upon the nave, and make him lete a fart
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,
By preve which that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eek the stink, un-to the spokes ende,
Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
By cause he is a man of greet honour,
Shal have the *firste fruit, as reson is*,
The noble usage of freres yet is this,
The worthy men of hem shul first be served,
And certeinly, *he* hath it weel deserved
He hath to-day taught us so muchel good
With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouche-sauf, I sey *for me*,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde al his covent hardily,
He bereth him so faire and holily"

The lord, the lady, and ech man, save the frere,
Seyde that Jankin spak, in this matere,
As wel as Euclide or [as] Ptholomee.
Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, subtiltee
And heigh wit made him speken as he spak;
He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.
And Jankin hath y-wonne a newe goune —
My tale is doon we been almost at toune

The lord, the lady, and each man, save the friar,
Agreed that Jenkin spoke, as classifier,
As well as Euclid or as Ptolemy
Touching the churl, they said that subtlety
And great wit taught him how to make his crack.
He was no fool, nor a demoniac
And Jenkin by this means has won a gown.
My tale is done, we're almost into town.

HERE ENDETH THE SUMMONER'S TALE

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE CLERK OF OXFORD'S TALE

"Sir clerk of Oxenford," our hoste sayde,
"Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde,
Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;
This day ne herde I of your tonge a word
I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme,
But Salomon seith, "every thing hath tyme"
For goddes sake, as beth of bettre chere,
It is no tyme for to studien here
Telle us som mery tale, by your fey,
For what man that is entred in a pley,
He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,
To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,
Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe
Telle us som mery thing of aventures;—
Your termes, your colours, and your figures,
Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte
Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges wryte.
Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, I yow preye,
That we may understonde what ye seye."
This worthy clerk benignely answerde,
"Hoste," quod he, "I am under your yerde,
Ye han of us as now the governaunce,
And therfor wol I do yow obeisaunce,
As fer as reson axeth, hardily
I wol yow telle a tale which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,
I prey to god so yeve his soule reste!
Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethoryke sweete
Enlumined al Itaille of poetrye,
As Linian dide of philosophye
Or lawe, or other art particuler;
But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer
But as it were a twinkling of an yë,
Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we dyë.
But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,
I seye that first with heigh style he endyteth,
Er he the body of his tale wryteth,
A proheme, in the which discryveth he
Pemond, and of Saluces the contree,
And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye,
That been the boundes of West Lumbardye,

Sir clerk of Oxford," our good host then said,
"You ride as quiet and still as is a maid
But newly wedded, sitting at the board,
This day I've heard not from your tongue a word
Perhaps you mull a sophism that's prime
But Solomon says, each thing to its own time.
"For God's sake, smile and be of better cheer,
It is no time to think and study here
Tell us some merry story, if you may,
For whatsoever man will join in play,
He needs must to the play give his consent
But do not preach, as friars do in Lent,
To make us, for our old sins, wail and weep,
And see your tale shall put us not to sleep
"Tell us some merry thing of adventures
Your terms, your colours, and your speech figures,
Keep them in store till so be you indite
High style, as when men unto kings do write
Speak you so plainly, for this time, I pray,
That we can understand what things you say"
This worthy clerk, benignly he answered
'Good host," said he, "I am under your yard,
You have of us for now, the governance,
And therefore do I make *you obeisance*
As far as reason asks it, readily
I will relate to you a tale that I
Learned once, at Padua, of a worthy clerk,
As he proved by his words and by his work,
He's dead, now, and nailed down within his chest,
And I pray God to give his soul good rest!
' Francis Petrarch, the laureate poet,
Was this clerk's name, whose rhetoric so sweet
Illumed all Italy with poetry,
As did Lignano with philosophy,
Or law, or other art particular,
But Death, that suffers us not very far,
Nor more, as 'twere, than twinkling of an eye,
Has slain them both, as all of us shall die
"But forth, to tell you of this worthy man,
Who taught this tale to me, as I began,
I say that first, with high style he indites,
Before the body of his tale he writes,
A proem to describe those lands renowned,
Saluzzo, Piedmont, and the region round,
And speaks of Apennines, those hills so high
That form the boundary of West Lombardy,

And of Mount Viso specially the tall
Whereat the Po out of a fountain small
Takes its first springing and its tiny source
That eastward ever increases in its course
Toward Emilia Ferrara, and Venice,
The which is a long story to devise
And truly in my judgment reluctant
It is a thing not wholly relevant
Save that he introduces thus his gear
But thus is his tale, which you now may hear "

And of Mount Vesulus in special,
Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,
Taketh his firste springing and his sours,
That estward ay encresseth in his cours
To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venyse·
The which a long thing were to devyse
And trewely, as to my jugement,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he wol conveyen his matere
But this his tale, which that ye may here."

THE CLERK'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE TALE OF THE CLERK OF OXFORD

There is in the west side of Italy
Down at the foot of Mount Viso the cold
A pleasant plain that yields abundantly
Where many a tower and town one may behold
That were there founded in the times of old
With many another fair delightful sight
Saluzzo is this noble region bright

A marquis once was lord of all that land,
As were his noble ancestors before
Obedient and ready to his hand
Were all his lieges, both the less and more
Thus in delight he lived and had of yore
Beloved and feared, through favour of Fortune
Both by his lords and by the common run

Therewith he was to speak of lineage
Born of the noblest blood of Lombardy
With person fair and strong and young of age
And full of honour and of courtesy
Discreet enough to lead his nation he
Save in some things wherein he was to blame
And Walter *was this young lord s Christian name*

I blame him thus that he considered naught
Of what in coming time might him betide
But on his present wish was all his thought
As he would hunt and hawk on every side
Well nigh all other cares would he let slide
And would not and this was the worst of all
Marry a wife for aught that might befall

That point *alone* his people felt so sore
That in a flock one day to him they went
And one of them the wisest in all lore
Or else because the lord would best consent
That he should tell him what the people meant
Or else that he could make the matter clear
He to the marquis spoke as you shall hear

O noble marquis your humanity
Assures us aye and gives us hardiness
As often as there is necessity
That we to you may tell our heaviness
Accept, lord, *now of your great nobleness*

There is, at the west syde of Itaille,
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,
A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte

A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
As were his worthy eldres him bifore,
And obeisant and redy to his honde
Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more
Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,
Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Bothe of his lordes and of his commune

Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
The gentilleste y born of Lumbardye,
A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curteisye,
Discreet y nogh his contree for to gye,
Save in somme thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter *was this yonge lordes name*

I blame him thus, that he considereth noght
In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,
But on his lust present was al his thoght,
As for to hauke and hunte on every syde,
Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,
And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,
Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle

Only that point his peple bar so sore,
That flokmele on a day they to him wente,
And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,
Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
That he sholde telle him what his peple mente,
Or elles coude he shewe wel swich matere,
He to the markis seyde as ye shul here

'O noble markis, your humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
As ofte as tyme is of necessitee
That we to yow mowe telle our hevinesse
Accepteth, lord, *now for your gentillesse.*

That we with pitous herte un to yow pleyne,
And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne

Al have I noght to done in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,
Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
I dar the better aske of yow a space
Of audience, to shewen our requeste,
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.

For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow
And al your werk and ever han doon, that we
Ne coude nat us self devysen how
We mighte liven in more felicitee,
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be,
That for to been a wedded man yow leste,
Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes reste

Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok
Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse
Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok,

And though your grene youthe floure as
yit,
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,
And deeth manaceth every age, and smit
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon
And al so certein as we knowe echoon
That we shul deye as uncerteyn we alle
Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle

Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,
That never yet refuseden your heste,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,
Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte leste,
Born of the gentilleste and of the meste
Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme
Honour to god and yow, as we can deme

Your heritage, o! wo were us alyve!
Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve

Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis herte han pitee
Ye wol, quod he, myn owene peple dere,
To that I never erst thoghte streyne me
I me rejoysed of my libertee,
That selde tyme is founde in mariage,
Ther I was free, I moot been in servage

But nathelees I see your trewe entente,
And truste upon your wit, and have don ay,

That we with sincere hearts may here complain
Nor let your ears my humble voice disdain

And you my lord will do as you like best

Save one thing lord and if your will it be
That to be wedded man you hold it best
Then were your people s hearts at utter rest

But bow your neck beneath that blessed yoke
Of sovereignty and not of hard service
The which men call espousal or wedlock

And though your time of green youth flower as
yet
Age creeps in always s lent as a stone
Death threatens every age nor will forget
For any state and there escapes him none
And just as surely as we know each one
That we shall d e uncertain are we all
What day it is when death shall on us fall

Born of the noblest blood and the greatest
Of all this land so that it ought to seem
Honour to God and you as we shall deem

Their humble prayer and their so earnest cheer
Roused in the marquis heart great sympathy
You d have me he repl ed my people dear

' Nevertheless I see your true intent
And know there s always sense in what you say,

Wherefore of my free will will I consent
To wed a wife as soon as ever I may
But whereas you have offered here today
To choose a wife for me I you release
From that and pray that you thereof will cease

Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente
To wedde me, as sone as ever I may
But ther-as ye han profred me to-day
To chese me a wyf, I yow relesse
That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse

For God knows well that children oft retain
Naught of their worthy elders gone before
Goodness comes all from God not of the strain
Whereof they were engendered furthermore
I trust in God's great goodness and therefore
My marriage and my state and all my ease
I leave to Him to do with as He please

For god it woot, that children ofte been
Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore,
Bountee comth al of god, nat of the streen
Of which they been engendred and y bore,
I truste in goddes bountee, and therfore
My mariage and myn estaat and reste
I him bitake, he may don as him leste

Let me alone in choosing of my wife
That burden on my own back I'll endure
But I pray you and charge you on your life
That what wife I may take me you'll assure
You'll honour her throughout her life's tenure
In word and deed both here and everywhere
As if she were an emperor's daughter fair

Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
That charge up-on my bak I wol endure,
But I yow preye, and charge up-on your lyf,
That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
As she an emperoures doghter were.

And furthermore this shall you swear that you
Against my choice shall neither grouse nor strive
Since I'm forgoing liberty and woo
At your request so may I ever thrive
As where my heart is set there will I wive
And save you give consent in such manner,
I pray you speak no more of this matter

And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve,
For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve,
And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
I prey yow, speketh na more of this matere."

With hearty will they swore and gave assent
To all this and no one of them said nay
Praying him of his grace before they went
That he would set for them a certain day
For his espousal soon as might be yea
For still the people had a little dread
Lest that the marquis would no woman wed

With hertly wil they sworen, and assenten
To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay;
Bisekinge him of grace, er that they wenten,
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he may,
For yet alwey the peple som what dredde
Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde

He granted them the day that pleased him best
Whereon he would be married certainly
And said he did all this at their request
And they with humble hearts, obediently,
Kneeling upon their knees full reverently,
All thanked him there and thus they made an
end
Of their design and homeward did they wend

He graunted hem a day, swich as him leste,
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,
And seyde, he dide al this at hir requeste,
And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
Knelinge up-on her knees ful reverently
Him thanken alle, and thus they han an
ende
Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they wende.

And thereupon he to his officers
Ordered that for the fête they should provide
And to his household gentlemen and squires
Such charges gave as pleased him to decide
And all obeyed him let him praise or chide
And each of them did all his diligence
To show unto the fête his reverence

And heer up-on he to his officeres
Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,
And to his privee knightes and squyeres
Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye,
And they to his comandement obeye,
And ech of hem doth al his diligence
To doon un to the feste reverence

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST PART

HERE BEGINNETH THE SECOND PART

Not far from that same honoured palace where
This marquis planned his marriage at this tide
There stood a hamlet on a site most fair
Wherein the poor folk of the countryside
Stabled their cattle and did all abide

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honurable
Ther as this markis shoop his mariage,
Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,
In which that povre folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,

And of hir labour took hir sustenance
After that th'erthe yaf hem habundance

Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
Which that was holden povrest of hem alle,
But hye god som tyme senden can
His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle
Janicula men of that throp him calle
A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to sighte,
And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she oon the faireste under sonne;
For povreliche y-fostred up was she,
No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte y-ronne,
Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne
She drank, and for she wolde vertu
plese,
She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.

But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,

And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde
bringe
Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,
The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir livinge,
And made hir bed ful harde and no thing softe;
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte
With everich obeisaunce and diligence
That child may doon to fadres reverence

Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature,
Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yë

Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
And eek hir vertu, passing any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede
For thogh the peple have no greet insight
In vertu, he considered ful right
Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde

The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
Telle what womman that it sholde be,
For which merveille wondred many a man,
And seyden, what they were in privetee,
"Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee?
Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle!
Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle?"

But natheles this markis hath don make

And where their labour gave them sustenance
After the earth had yielded abundance

Amongst these humble folk there dwelt a man
Who was considered poorest of them all,

If one should speak of virtuous beauty,
Then was she of the fairest under sun,
Since fostered in dire poverty was she,
No lust luxurious in her heart had run,
More often from the well than from the tun
She drank, and since she would chaste virtue
please,
She knew work well, but knew not idle ease

But though this maiden tender was of age,
Yet in the breast of her virginity
There was enclosed a ripe and grave courage,
And in great reverence and charity
Her poor old father fed and fostered she,
A few sheep grazing in a field she kept,
For she would not be idle till she slept

And when she homeward came, why she would
bring
Roots and green herbs, full many times and oft,
The which she'd shred and boil for her living,
And made her bed a hard one and not soft,
Her father kept she in their humble croft
With what obedience and diligence
A child may do for father's reverence.

Upon Griselda, humble daughter pure,
The marquis oft had looked in passing by,
As he a hunting rode at adventure,

Commending to his heart her womanhood,

Her goodness, and decided that he would
Wed only her, if ever wed he should

The day of wedding came, but no one can
Tell who the woman is that bride shall be,
At which strange thing they wondered, many a man,

Nevertheless, this marquis has bade make,

Of jewels set in gold and in rich azure
Brooches and rings all for Griselda s sake
And for her garments took he then the measure
By a young maiden of her form and stature
And found all other ornaments as well
That for such wedding would be meet to tell

The time of mid morn of that very day
Approached when this lord s marriage was to be,
And all the palace was bedecked and gay
Both hall and chambers each in its degree
With kitchens stuffed with food in great plenty,
There might one see the last and least dainty
That could be found in all of Italy

This regal marquis splendidly arrayed
With lords and ladies in his company
(Who to attend the feasting had been prayed),
And of his retinue the bachelory
With many a sound of sundry melody
Unto the village whereof I have told
In this array the nearest way did hold

Griselda who God knows was innocent
That for her sake was all this fine array
To fetch some water to a fountain went
Yet she returned soon did this lovely may,
For she had heard it said that on this day
The marquis was to wed and if she might
She was full fain to see the glorious sight

She thought With other maidens *I will stand*
(Who are my friends) within our door and see
The marchioness and therefore I ll turn hand
To do at home as soon as it may be
The household work that s waiting there for me,
And then I ll be at leisure to behold
Her if they this way to the castle hold

And as across her threshold she d have gone
The marquis came and for her did he call
And she set down her water jar anon
Beside the threshold in an ox s stall
And down upon her two knees did she fall
And kneeling with grave countenance was still
Till she had heard what was his lordship s will

This thoughtful marquis spoke unto this maid
Full soberly and said in th s *manner*
Griselda where s your father? so he said
And she with reverence and with humble cheer,
Answered My lord *he is but inside here*
And in she went without more tarrying
And to the marquis did her father bring

He by the hand then took this ancient man
And said when he had led him well aside
Janicula I neither will nor can
Conceal my love, nor my heart s longing hide,
If you but acquiesce whate er betide
Your daughter will I take before I wend,
To be my wife *until her life s dear end*

Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
And of hir clothing took he the mesure
By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,
And eek of othere ornamentes alle
That un to swich a wedding sholde falle

The tyme of undern of the same day
Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be,
And al the paleys put was in array,
Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree,
Houses of office stuffed with plentee
Ther maystow seen of deyntevous vitaille,
That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille

This royal markis, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
The whiche unto the feste were y prayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde

Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may
For wel she hadde herd seyd, that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte

She thoghte, "*I wol with othere maydens stonde,*
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth un to me,
And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey un to the castel holde"

And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle,
And she set doun hir water pot anoon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And doun up-on hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille

This thoghtful markis spak un to this mayde
Ful sobrely, and seyde in this manere,
"Wher is your fader, Grisildis?" he sayde,
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde, *lord, he is al redy here*"
And in she gooth with-outen lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette

He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde,
'Janicula, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde
If that thou vouche-sauf, what so bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf, un to hir lyves ende

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man y bore,
And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyd bifore,
If that thou wolt un to that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone in lawe?'

This sodeyn cas this man astoned so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking
He stood, unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
But only thus 'lord," quod he, my willing
Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
I wol no-thing ye be my lord so dere,
Right as yow lust governeth this
matere"

"Yet wol I," quod this markis softely,
"That in thy chambre I and thou and she
Have a collacion, and wostow why?
For I wol axe if it hir wille be
To be my wyf, and reule hir after me,
And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
I wol noght speke out of thyn audience'

And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,
The peple cam un to the hous with-oute,
And wondred hem in how honest manere
And tentifly she kepte hir fader dere
But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte,
For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
To seen so greet a gest come in that place,
She never was to swiche gestes woned,
For which she loked with ful pale face
But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde
To this benigne verray feithful mayde

'Grisilde," he seyde, "ye shul wel understonde
It lyketh to your fader and to me
That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,

I seye this, *be ye redy with good herte*
To al my lust, and that I frely may,
As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
And eek whan I sey ye,' ne sey nat 'nay,'
Neither by word ne frowning contenance,
Swer this, and here I swere our alliance"

Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
She seyde, 'lord, undigne and unworthy
Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede,
But as ye wol your self, right so wol I
And heer I swere that never willingly

Assure me on the point I made before—
Can we together in this compact draw
And will you take me as your son in law?'

Then I will said this marquis qu etly
That in your chamber you and I and she

And all this sha i be done in your presence
I will not speak without your audience

And while in chamber they three were about
Their business whereof you ll hereafter hear
The people crowded through the house without
And wondered by what honest method there
So carefully she d kept her father dear
But more Griselda wondered as she might,
For never before that saw she such a sight

No wonder though astonishment she felt
At seeing so great a guest within that place,
With people of his sort she d never dealt
Wherefore she looked on with a pall d face
But briefly through the matter now to race,
These are the very words the marquis sa d
To this most modest truly constant maid

Griselda said he you shall understand
It s pleasing to your father and to me

And too when I say yea you say not nay
By word or frown to what I have designed
Swear this and here I will our contract bind

Wondering upon this word quaking for fear
She said My lord unsuited unworthy
Am I to take the honour you give me here
But what you d have that very thing would I
And here I swear that never willingly

In deed or thought, will I you disobey,
To save my life, and I love life, I say."

"This is enough, Griselda mine," cried he
And forth he went then with full sober cheer
Out at the door, and after him came she,
And to the people who were waiting near,
"This is my wife," he said, "who's standing here.
Honour her, all, and love her, all, I pray,
Who love me, and there is no more to say"

And so that nothing of her former gear
She should take with her to his house, he bade
That women strip her naked then and there,

From head to foot they clothed her all anew

Her hair they combed and brushed, which fell
untressed

Scarcely the people knew her for fairness,
So transformed was she in her splendid dress

This marquis her has married with a ring
Brought for the purpose there and then has set

Conveyed her home, and thus the day they spent
In revelry until the sun's descent

And briefly forth throughout this tale to chase,

To everyone she soon became so dear

Another creature now, or so they deemed

So gentle and so worthy reverence,
And she could so the people's hearts embrace,
That each her loved that looked upon her face.

Not only in Saluzzo, in the town,
Was published wide the goodness of her name,

In werk ne thoght I nil yow disobeye,
For to be deed, though me were looth to deye"

"This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn!" quod he
And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
"This is my wyf," quod he, "that standeth here.
Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,
Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to seye"

And for that no-thing of hir olde gere
She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right theer;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wher-in she was clad.
But natheles this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.

Hir heres han they kembd, that lay
untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingers smale
A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,
And sette hir ful of nowches grete and smale,
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse

This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Broght for the same cause, and than hir sette
Up-on an hors, snow-whyt and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With joyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markisesse
God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by lyklinesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.

That to Janicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by conjecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For thogh that ever vertuous was she,
She was encressed in swich excellence
Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hir lovede that loked on hir face.

Noght only of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,

But eek bisyde in many a regioun,
If oon seyde wel, another seyde the same,
So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde

But throughout many a land where she'd renown
If one said well another said the same
So widespread of her goodness was the fame
That men and women came the young and old
Went to Saluzzo her but to behold

Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In goddes pees lived ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace y nogh had he,
And for he saugh that under low degree
Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde
A prudent man, and that is seyn ful selde

Thus Walter lowly nay but royally
Wedded by Fortune's grace right honourably
In the good peace of God lived easily
At home and outward grace enough had he,
And since he saw that under low degree
Is virtue often hid the people fairly
Held him a prudent man and that's done rarely

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
But eek, whan that the cas requyred it,
The commune profit coude she redresse
Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevinesse
In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,
And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and ese

Not only this Griselda through her wit
Knew how with wifely arts her home to bless
But also when there was need for it
The people's wrongs she knew how to redress
There was no discord rancour heaviness
In all that land that she could not appease
And wisely bring them all to rest and ease

Though that hir housbonde absent were anoon,
If gentil men, or othere of hir contree
Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem atoon,
So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,
And jugements of so greet equitee,
That she from heven sent was, as men wende,
Peple to save and every wrong t amende

Although her husband from the court were gone,
If gentlemen or less of her country
Were angered she would bring them all at one,
So wise and so mature of speech was she
And judgments gave of so great equity
Men felt that God from Heaven her did send
People to save and every wrong to amend

Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
Was wedded, she a doughter hath y bore,
Al had hir lever have born a knave child
Glad was this markis and the folk therfore,
For though a mayde child come al bifore,
She may unto a knave child atteyne
By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne

Not long Griselda had it seems been wed

Since barren she was not it now was plain

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND PART

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD PART

It happened as it has sometimes before
That when this child had sucked a month or so,

pry

He had sufficiently tried her before
And found her ever good what needed it
That he should test her ever more and more?

And putten her in anguish and in drede

For which this markis wroghte in this manere,
He cam alone a night, ther as she lay,
With sterne face and with ful trouble chere,
And seyde thus, "Grisild" quod he, "that day
That I yow took out of your povre array,

When I removed you from your poor array

And placed you in a state of nobleness—
You have not all forgotten that, I guess

"I say, Griselda this your dignity
Wherein I have so placed you as I trow
Has not made you forgetful now to be
That I raised you from poor estate and low
For any good you might then have or know
Take heed of every word that now I say
There's no one else shall hear it by my fay

"You know and well enough how you came here
Into this house it is not long ago
And though to me you are both lief and dear
Unto my nobles you are not and so
They say that unto them 'tis shame and woe
To be your subjects and compelled to serve
You who are village born and naught deserve

And specially since that girl child you bore
These things they've said—of this there is no doubt,
But I desire as I have done before
To live at peace with all the folk about
I cannot in this matter leave them out
I must do with your daughter what is best
Not as I would but under men's behest

And yet God knows the act is hard for me
And only with your knowledge would I bring
The deed to pass but this I would said he
That you assent with me to this one thing
Show now that patience in your life's dealing
You told me of and swore to in your village
The day that marked the making of our marriage

When she had heard all this this she received
With never a word or change of countenance

That which is yours do you what thing you will

Nor length of time nor death may this deface
Nor turn my passion to another place

Glad was this marquis of her answering
And yet he feigned as if he were not so
All dreary were his face and his bearing
When it came time from chamber he should go
Soon after this a quarter hour or so
He privily told all of his intent
Unto a man whom to his wife he sent

A kind of sergeant was this serving man
Who had proved often faithful as he'd found,
In matters great and such men often can

And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,
Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse

I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be
That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe
For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe
Tak hede of every word that I yow seye,
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye

Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam here
In to this hous, it is nat longe ago,
And though to me that ye be lief and dere,
Un to my gentils ye be no-thing so,
They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo
For to be subgets and ben in servage
To thee, that born art of a smal village

And namely, sith thy doghter was y bore,
Thise wordes han they spoken doutelees,
But I desyre, as I have doon bifore,
To live my lyf with hem in reste and pees,
I may nat in this caas be recchelees
I moot don with thy doghter for the beste,
Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste

And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to me,
But nathelees with oute your witing
I wol nat doon, but thus wol I," quod he,
"That ye to me assente as in this thing
Shewe now your pacience in your werking
That ye me highte and swore in your village
That day that maked was our mariage"

Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved
Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce,
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved
She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your plesaunce,
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille
Your owene thing, werketh after your wille

Ther may no-thing, god so my soule save,
Lyken to yow that may displese me,
Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,

Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so,
Al drery was his chere and his loking
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath told al his entente
Un to a man, and to his wyf him sente

A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can

Don execucioun on thinges badde
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde,
And whom this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
In to the chambre he stalked him ful stille

'Madame,' he seyde, "ye mote foryeve it me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned,
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been y feyned,
They mowe wel been biwailled or compleyned,
But men mot nede un to her lust obeye,
And so wol I, ther is na more to seye

They may be much lamented or complained
But men must needs their every wish obey,
And thus will I there is no more to say

This child I am comanded for to take' —
And spak na more, but out the child he hente
Despitously, and gan a chere make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente
Grisildis mot al suffren and consente,
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille

This child I am commanded now to take —
And spoke no more but seized that innocent
Pitilessly and did a gesture make
As if he would have slain it ere he went
Griselda she must suffer and consent
And so meek as a lamb she sat there still,
And let this cruel sergeant do his will

Suspecious was the diffame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,

Suspicious of repute was this same man

But atte laste speken she bigan,
And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
So as he was a worthy gentil man

And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,

this might shallow dyen for my sake

I trowe that to a nonce in this cas
It had ben hard this rewthe for to se,
Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed 'allas!'

Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heste,

Go now said she and do my lord s behest,

This sergeant cam un to his lord ageyn,

This sergeant went unto his lord again

And of Griselda's words and of her cheer
He told him point by point, all short and plain,
And so presented him his daughter dear
A little pity felt the *marquis* here,
Nevertheless, he held his purpose still,
As great lords do when they will have their will,

And bade the sergeant that he privily
Should softly swaddle the young child and wrap
With all the necessaries, tenderly,
And in a coffer or some garment lap,
But upon pain his head should meet mishap
No man should know the least of his intent,
Nor whence he came, nor whither that he went,

But to Bologna, to his sister dear
Who then was of Panago the countess,
He should take it, and tell of matters here,
Asking of her she do her busyness
This child to foster in all nobleness,
And whose the child was, that he bide her hide
From everyone, for aught that might betide

The sergeant goes and has fulfilled this thing,
But to this *marquis* now return must we,
For soon he went to see her, wondering
If by his wife's demeanour he might see,
Or by her conversation learn that she
Were changed in aught, but her he could not find
Other than ever serious and kind

As glad, as humble, as busy in service,
And even in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to him at all times in each wise,
And of her daughter not a word spoke she
No strange nor odd look of adversity
Was seen in her, and her *dear daughter's* name
She never named in earnest nor in game

And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere
He tolde him point for point, in short and playn,
And him presenteth with his doghter dere
Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his manere,
But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille;

And bad his sergeant that he prively
Sholde this child ful softe winde and wrappe
With alle circumstances tendrely,
And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
But, up-on peyne his heed of for to swappe,
That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente;

But at Bologne to his suster dere,
That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse,
He sholde it take, and shewe hir this matere,
Bisekinge hir to don hir bisinesse
This child to fostre in alle gentilesse;
And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde
From every wight, for oght that may bityde.

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thing;
But to this markis now retourne we,
For now goth he ful faste imagining
If by his wyves chere he mighte see,
Or by hir word aperceyve that she
Were chaunged, but he never hir coude finde
But ever in oon y-lyke sad and kinde

As glad, as humble, as bisy *in servyse,*
And eek *in* love as she was wont to be,
Was she to him in every maner wyse;
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
Non accident for noon adversitee
Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter name
Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.

HERE ENDETH THE THIRD PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE FOURTH PART

In this way over them there passed four years
Ere she with child was, but as High God would,
A boy child then she bore, as it appears,
By Walter, fair and pleasing to behold
And when *folk* this word to the father told,
Not only he but all the people raised
Their joyous hymns to God and His grace praised

When he was two years old and from the breast
Weaned by his nurse, it chanced upon a day
This *marquis* had another wish to test
And try his wife yet further, so they say
Oh, needless her temptation in this way!
But wedded men *no measure can observe*
When they've a wife who's patient and will serve

"Wife," said this *marquis*, "you have heard before,
My people bear our marriage with ill will;
Particularly since my son you bore
Now it is worse than ever, all this ill
Their murmurs all my heart and courage kill,

In this estaat ther passed been foure yeer
Er she with childe was, but, as god wolde,
A knave child she bar by this Walter,
Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
Nat only he, but al his contree, merie
Was for this child, and god they thanke and herie.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the brest
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another lest
To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may.
O needles was she tempted in assay!
But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,
Whan that they finde a pacient creature.

"Wyf," quod this markis, "ye han herd er this,
My peple sikly berth our mariage,
And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,
Now is it worse than ever in al our age.
The murmur sleeth myn herte and my corage;

For to myne eres comth the voys so smerte,
That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.

'I have," quod she, "seyd thus, and ever shal,
I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,

And certes, if I hadde prescience

Deth may noght make no comparisoun

This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,
Or worse, if men worse can devyse,
Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of beautee
And ever in oon so pacient was she,
That she no chere made of hevinesse,
But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse,

Save this, she preyed him that, if he mighte,
Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,
His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,

For to my ears come words so aimed to smart
That they have well nigh broken all my heart

Well ought I of such murmurs to take heed,
For truly do I fear the populace,
Though they say nothing plainly to my face

I have said she said thus and ever shall

For death can offer no loss that is known
Compared to your love s loss And when I say,
He saw his wife s great constancy then down

This ugly sergeant in the very wise
That he her daughter took away, so he
(Or worse if worse than this men could devise)

Save this She prayed him that and if he might,
Her son he d bury in an earthen grave
His tender limbs so delicate to sight,

From ravenous birds and from all beasts to save.
But she no answer out of him could have
He went his way as if he cared not thought,
But to Bologna tenderly 'twas brought

This marquis wondered ever more and more
Upon her patience, and indeed if he
Had not known truly in her years *before*
That she had loved her children perfectly,
He would have thought *that out of* subtlety
And malice, or from some urge *more savage*
She suffered this with calm face and courage

But well he knew that, next himself, 'twas plain
She loved her children best in every wise
But now to ask of women I am fain,
Whether these trials should not the man suffice?
What could an obdurate husband more devise
To prove her wifehood and her faithfulness,
And he continuing in his stubbornness?

But there are folk to such condition grown
That when they do a certain purpose take,
They cannot quit the intent they thus own,
But just as they were bound unto a stake
They will not *from* that first hard purpose shake.
Just so this marquis fully was *purposed*
To test his wife, as he was first disposed

He watched her, if by word or countenance
She show a change toward him, or in courage,
But never could he find a variance
She was aye one in heart and in visage,
And aye the farther that she went in age,
The more true, if such *thing* were possible,
She was in love, and painstaking, as well

From which it seemed that, as between those
two,
There was but one will, for, to Walter's quest,
The same thing was her sole desire also,
And—God be thanked!—all *fell out* for the best.
She showed well that, in all this world's unrest,
A wife, of her volition, *nothing* should
Will to be done, save as *her husband* would

The scandal of this Walter widely spread,
That, of his cruel heart, he'd wickedly
(Because a humble woman he had wed)
Murdered his two young children secretly
Such murmurs went among them *commonly*
No wonder, *either*, for to people's ear
There came no *word but* they'd been murdered
there

For which, whereas the people theretofore
Had loved him, now the scandal of such shame
Caused them to hate where they had loved *before*;
To be a murderer brings a hateful name
Nevertheless, in earnest not in game
Would he *from this his* cruel plan be bent;
To test his wife was all his fixed intent.

Fro foules and fro bestes for to save
But she non *answer of him mighte* have.
He wente his wey, as him no-*thing* ne roghte;
But to Bologne he tendrely it broghte.

This markis wondreth ever lenger *the more*
Up-on hir pacience, and if that he
Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,
That parfitly hir children lovede she,
He wolde have wend that of som *subtiltee*,
And *of malice or for cruel corage*,
That she had suffred thus with sad visage.

But wel he knew that next him-self, certayn,
She loved hir children best in every wyse.
But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,
If thise assayes mighte nat suffyse?
What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse
To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse,
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,
That, whan they have a certein purpos *take*,
They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed
To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage,
But never coude he finde variance,
She was ay oon in herte and in visage,
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The more trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to him in love, *and more* penible.

For which *it semed* thus, that of hem
two
Ther nas but o wil, for, as Walter leste,
The same lust was hir plesance also,
And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste
A wyf, *as of hir-self*, no-thing ne sholde
Wille in effect, but *as hir housbond* wolde.

The sclaundre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a povre womman wedded hadde,
Hath *mordred* bothe his children prively.
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples *ere*
Ther cam no word but that they *mordred*
were

For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore
Had loved him wel, the sclaundre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hatede *therfore*,
To been a mordrer is an hateful name.
But natheles, *for ernest ne for game*
He of his cruel purpos nolde stente;
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.

How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad him to wedde another, if him leste

I say he ordered they should counterfeit
A papal bull and set it forth therein
That he had leave his first wife no v to quit
Bv papal dispensation with no sin
To stop all such dissension as did win
Between his folk and him thus said the bull
The which thing they d d publish to the full.

The rude peple, as it no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it had been right so,

And secrely he to Bologne it sente

in nonourable estate all openly
But one more thing he prayed him, utterly
That he to no one whoso should inquire
Would tell who was their mother or their sire

But seye, the mayden sholde y wedded be
Un to the markis of Saluce anon
And as this erl was preyed, so dide he,
For at day set he on his wey is goon
Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,
In riche array, this mayden for to gyde,
Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde

But say The maiden married was to be
Unto Saluzzo s marquis and anon

Arrayed was toward hir mariage
This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere,
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age,
Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad chere,
Toward Saluces shaping hir journey,
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey

HERE ENDETH THE FOURTH PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE FIFTH PART

Among al this, after his wikke usage,
This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more
To the uttereste preve of hir corage,
Fully to han experience and lore

If she were yet as steadfast as before,
He on a day in open audience
Loudly said unto her this rude sentence:

"Truly, Griselda, I'd much joy, perchance,
When you I took for wife, for your goodness
And for your truth and your obedience,
Not for your lineage nor your wealth, I guess
But now I know, in utter certainness,
That in great lordship, if I well advise,
There is great servitude in sundry wise.

"I may not act as every plowman may,
My people have constrained me that I take
Another wife, and this they ask each day,
And now the pope, hot rancour thus to slake,
Consents, I dare the thing to undertake,
And truly now this much to you I'll say,
My new wife journeys hither on her way

'Be strong of heart and leave at once her place,
And that same dower that you brought to me,
Take it again, I grant it of my grace,
Return you to your father's house," said he,
"No man may always have prosperity,
With a calm heart I urge you to endure
The stroke of Fortune or of adventure"

And she replied again, of her patience
"My lord," said she, "I know, and knew alway,
How that between your own magnificence
And my poor state, no person can or may
Make a comparison in an equal way
I never held me worthy or of grade
To be your wife, no, nor your chambermaid

[illegible] me

But only servant to your worthiness,
And ever shall, while my life may endure,
Beyond all worldly beings, that is sure,

"That you so long, of your benignity,
Have held me here in honour in this way,
Where I was never worthy, once, to be,
For that, thank God and you—to God I pray
He will reward you There's no more to say
Unto my father gladly will I wend
And dwell with him until my life shall end

[illegible] fostered [illegible]

Another man for husband or love's sake

"And of your new wife, may God of His grace
Grant you but joy and all prosperity:

If that she were as stedfast as bifore,
He on a day in open audience
Ful boistously hath seyd hir this sentence:

"Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough plesaunce
To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,
As for your trouthe and for your obeisaunce,
Nought for your linage ne for your richesse,
But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse
That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
Ther is gret servitute in sondry wyse.

I may nat don as every plowman may;
My peple me constreyneth for to take
Another wyf, and cryen day by day;
And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
Consenteth it, that dar I undertake,
And treweliche thus muche I wol yow seye,
Ny newe wyf is coming by the weye.

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,
And thilke dower that ye broghten me
Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace,
Retourneth to your fadres hous," quod he,
"No man may alwey han prosperitee;
With evene herte I rede yow t'endure
The strook of fortune or of aventure."

And she answerde agayn in pacience,
"My lord," quod she, "I woot, and wiste alway
How that bitwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight can ne may
Maken *comparison*, it is no nay.
I ne heeld me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.

And in this hous, ther ye me lady made—
The heighe god take I for my witnesse,
And also wisly he my soule glade—
I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature

That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde it yow, there is na-more to seye.
Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwelle un-to my lyves ende.

Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede
A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.

And of your newe wyf, god of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee:

For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to be,
For sith it lyketh yow, my lord," quod she,
"That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.

But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to finde.
O gode god! how gentil and how kinde
Ye semed by your speche and your visage
The day that maked was our mariage!

But sooth is seyd, algate I finde it trewe—
For in effect it preved is on me—
Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be
That ever in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.

And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore

The remenant of your jewels redy be
In with your chambre, dar I saufly sayn;
Naked out of my fadres hous," quod she,
"I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.
Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn,
But yet I hope it be nat your entente
That I smoklees out of your paleys wente.

Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing,

I was your wyf, thogh I unworthy were

Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my mede,
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
That was your wyf, and heer take I my leve
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve "

"The smok," quod he, "that thou hast on thy
bak,
Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee "

"But whereas now you proffer me such dower

"But truth is said—at least I find it true
For actually its proof is seen in me—
Old love is not the same as when it's new.
But truly, lord, for no adversity,
Though I should die of all this, shall it be
That ever in word or deed I shall repent
That I gave you my heart in whole intent.

And here again my clothing I restore,
And, too, my wedding ring, for evermore.

"The rest of all your jewels, they will be
Within your chamber, as I dare maintain,
Naked out of my father s house," said she,
"I came, and naked I return again
To follow aye your pleasure I am fain,
But yet I hope it is not your intent
That smockless from your palace I be sent

Let me not like a worm go on my way
Remember that, my own lord, always dear,
I was your wife, though I unworthy were

Wherefore, as guerdon for my maidenhead,
The which I brought, but shall not with me bear,
Let them but give me, for my only meed,

"The smock," said he, "that you have on your
back,
Let it stay there and wear it forth," said he

The folk they followed, weeping and with cries,
And Fortune did they curse as they passed on,
But she with weeping did not wet her eyes,
And all this while of words she said not one
Her father, who had heard this news anon,
Cursed then the day and hour when from the earth,
A living creature, nature gave him birth

For, beyond any doubt, this poor old man
Had always feared the marquis soon would tire,
And doubted since the marriage first began,
If when the lord had satisfied desire,
He would not think a wife of station higher,
For one of his degree, had been more right,
And send her thence as soon as ever he might.

To meet his daughter hastily went he,
For he, by noise of folk, knew her coming,
And with her old coat such as it might be,
He covered her, full sorrowfully weeping,
But the coat over her he could not bring,
For poor the cloth, and many days had passed
Since on her marriage day she wore it last

Thus with her father, for a certain space,
Did dwell this flower of wifely meek patience,
Who neither by her words nor in her face,
Before the people nor in their absence,
Showed that she thought to her was done offense;
Nor of her high estate a remembrance
Had she to judge by her calm countenance.

No wonder, though, for while in high estate,
Her soul kept ever full humility,
No mouth complaining, no heart delicate,
No pomp no look of haughty royalty,
But full of patience and benignity,
Discreet and prideless, always honourable,
And to her husband meek and firm as well

Men speak of Job and of his humbleness,
As clerks, when they so please, right well can write
Concerning men, but truth is, nevertheless,
Though clerks' praise of all women is but slight,
No man acquits himself in meekness quite
As women can, nor can be half so true
As women are, save this be something new.

The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,
And fortune ay they cursen as they goon,
But she fro weping kepte hir yën dreye,
Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
Hir fader, that this tyding herde anoon,
Curseth the day and tyme that nature
Shoop him to been a lyves creature.

For out of doute this olde povre man
Was ever in suspect of hir mariage;
For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,
That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,
Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
To his estaat so lowe for t'alighte,
And voyden hir as sone as ever he mighte.

Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,
For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,
And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,
He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge;
But on hir body mighte he it nat bringe.
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By dayes fele than at hir mariage.

Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,
Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,
That neither by hir wordes ne hir face
Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,
Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;
Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce
Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.

No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat
Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee;
No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,
No pompe, no semblant of royaltee,
But ful of pacient benignitee,
Discreet and prydeles, ay honurable,
And to hir housbonde ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Job and most for his humblesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel endyte,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a lyte,
Ther can no man in humblesse him acquyte
As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe
As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

[SIXTH PART]

Now from Bologna is Panago come,
Whereof the word spread unto great and less,
And in the ears of people, all and some,
It was told, too, that a new marchioness
Came with him, in such pomp and such richness
That never had been seen with human eye
So noble array in all West Lombardy

The marquis, who had planned and knew all this
Before this count was come, a message sent
To poor Griselda, who had lost her bliss,
With humble heart and features glad she went

Fro Bologne is this erl of Panik come,
Of which the fame up-sprang to more and lesse,
And in the peples eres alle and some
Was couth eek, that a newe markisesse
He with him broghte, in swich pompe and richesse,
That never was ther seyn with mannes yë
So noble array in al West Lumbardye.

The markis, which that shoop and knew al this,
Er that this erl was come, sente his message
For thilke sely povre Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,

Nat with no swollen thoght in hir corage,
Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir sette,
And reverently and wysly she him grette.

And on her knees before her lord she bent
No pride of thought did her devotion dim,
She wisely and with reverence greeted him

"Grisild," quod he, "my wille is outerly,
This mayden, that shal wedded been to me,
Receyved be to-morwe as royally
As it possible is in myn hous to be
And eek that every wight in his degree
Have his estaat in sitting and servyse
And heigh plesaunce, as I can best devyse

He said, "Griselda, hear what I shall say
This maiden who'll be wedded unto me,
Shall be received with splendour of array
As royally as in my house may be,
And too, that everyone in his degree
Have his due rank in seating and service,
And high pleasance, as I can best devise

I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn
The chambres for t'arraye in ordinaunce
After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn
That thyn were al swich maner governaunce,
Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce,
Though thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye"

I have not serving women adequate
To set the rooms in order as I would
And so I wish you here to regulate
All matters of the sort as mistress should
You know of old the ways I think are good,
And though you're clothed in such a slattern's way,
Go do at least your duty as you may"

"Nat only, lord, that I am glad," quod she,
"To doon your lust, but I desyre also
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree
With-outen feyning, and shal evermo
Ne never, for no wele ne no wo,
Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte stente
To love yow best with al my trewe entente"

Not only am I glad, my lord,' said she,
To do your wish but I desire also
To serve you and to please in my degree;
This without wearying I'll always do
And ever lord, in happiness or woe,
The soul within my heart shall not forgo
To love you best with true intent, I know"

And with that word she gan the hous to dighte,
And tables for to sette and beddes make,
And peyned hir to doon al that she mighte,
Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake,
And she, the moste servisable of alle,
Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle

Then she began to put the house aright,
To set the tables and the beds to make,
And was at pains to do all that she might,
Praying the chambermaids for good God's sake,
To make all haste and sweep hard and to shake,
And she, who was most serviceable of all,
Did every room array, and his wide hall

Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,
That with him broghte thise noble children tweye,
For which the peple ran to seen the sighte
Of hir array, so richely biseye,
And than at erst amonges hem they seye,
That Walter was no fool, thogh that him leste
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste

About mid morning did this count alight,
Who brought with him these noble children twain,
Whereat the people ran to see the sight
Of their array, so rich was all the train,
And for the first time did they not complain,
But said that Walter was no fool, at least,
To change his wife, for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they demen alle,
Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,
And more plesant, for hir heigh linage,
Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,
That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,
Commending now the markis governaunce —

For she was fairer far, so thought they all,
Than was Griselda, and of younger age,
And fairer fruit betwixt the two should fall,
And pleasing more, for her high lineage,
Her brother, too, so fair was of visage,
That, seeing them, the people all were glad,
Commending now the sense the marquis had

AUTHOR

"O stormy peple! unsad and ever untrewe!
Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane,
Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,
For lyk the mone ay wexe ye and wane,
Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a jane,
Your doom is fals, your constance yvel preveth,
A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth!"

"O storm torn people! Unstable and untrue!
Aye indiscreet, and changing as a vane,
Delighting ever in rumour that is new,
For like the moon aye do you wax and wane;
Full of all chatter dear at even a jane,
Your judgment's false, your constancy deceives,
A full great fool is he that you believes!"

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,

Thus said the sober folk of that city,

Seeing the people staring up and down
For they were glad just for the novelty,

rent
But with a glad face to the gate she went
With other folk to greet the marchioness
And afterward she did her busyness

With so glad face his guests she did receive
And with such tact each one in his degree
That no fault in it could a man perceive
But all they wondered much who she might be
That in so poor array as they could see
Yet knew so much of rank and reverence
And worthily they praised her high prudence

In all this while she never once did cease
The maiden and her brother to commend
With kindness of a heart that was at peace
So well that no man could her praise amend
But at the last when all these lords did wend
To seat themselves to dine then did he call
Griselda who was busy in his hall

Griselda said he as it were in play
How like you my new wife and her beauty?'
Right well said she my lord for by my
fay
A fairer saw I never than is she
I pray that God give her prosperity
And so I hope that to you both He'll send
Great happiness until your lives shall end

One thing I beg my lord and warn also
That you prick not with any tormenting
This tender maid as you've hurt others so

'This is enough Griselda mine!'
cried he,
'Be now no more ill pleased nor more afraid,
I have your faith and your benignity
As straitly as ever woman's was assayed

Whan that the peple gazed up and doun,
For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
To han a newe lady of hir toun
Na more of this make I now mencioun,
But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
And telle hir constance and hir bisinesse —

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing
That to the feste was apertinent,
Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing
Though it were rude and somdel eek
torent
But with glad chere to the yate is went,
With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
And after that doth forth hir bisinesse

With so glad chere his gestes she receyveth,
And conningly, everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man aperceyveth,
But ay they wondren what she mighte be
That in so povre array was for to see,
And coude swich honour and reverence,
And worthily they preisen hir prudence

In al this mene whyle she ne stente
This mayde and eek hir brother to commende
With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente,
So wel that no man coude hir prys amende
But atte laste, whan that thise lordes wende
To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle

'Grisilde," quod he, as it were in his pley,
"How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beautee?'
'Right wel," quod she, "my lord, for, in good
fey,
A fairer say I never noon than she
I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee,
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance y nogh un-to your lyves ende

O thing biseke I yow and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge
This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo,
For she is fostred in hir norishinge
More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,
She coude nat adversitee endure
As coude a povre fostred creature"

And whan this Walter say hir pacience,
Hir glade chere and no malice at al,
And he so ofte had doon to hir offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuing ever hir innocence overal,
This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse
To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse

"This is y nogh, Grisilde myn,"
quod he,
"Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed,
I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever womman was, assayed,

In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy s edfastnesse,"—
And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse

And she for wonder took of it no keep,
She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde,
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde
'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by god that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
Ne never hadde, as god my soule save!

tweye

And folk that otherweyes han seyd of me
I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for t assaye in thee thy wommanhede,
And nat to sleen my children god forbede!
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille"

Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she
  falleth
For pitous joye, and after hir swowninge
She bothe hir yonge children un to hir calleth,
And in hir armes pitously wepinge,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge
Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
She batheth bothe hir visage and hir heres

O which a pitous thing it was to see
Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!
"Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow," quod
  she,
That ye han saved me my children dere!
Now rekke I never to ben deed right here,
Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!

O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,
Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
Hadde eten yow, but god, of his mercy,
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath doon yow kept', and in that same stounde
Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde

And in her swough so sadly holdeth she
Hir children two, whan she gan hem t embrace,

In high place and in poverty arrayed
Now know I well dear wife your steadfastness
And he began to kiss her and to press

I ve kept them at Bologna secretly
Take them again for now you cannot say
That you have lost your children twain for
  aye

When she heard this she swooned and down d d
  fall

Oh what a pitiful thing it was to see
Her s ooning and her humble voice to hear!
Thanks lord that I may thank you now sa d
  she
That you have saved to me my children dear!
No v I am ready for my death right here
S nce I stand in your love and in your grace
Death matters not nor what my soul may face!

And in her swoon so forcefully held she
Her children two whom she d had in embrace,
That it was hard from her to set them free
Her arms about them gently to unlace
Oh many a tear on many a pitying face
Ran down of those were standing there beside,
Scarcely, for sympathy, could they abide

These ladies, when they found a tactful way,
Withdrew her and to her own room were gone,

In Italy, and then in peace, as best
His wife s old father at his court he kept
Until the soul out of his body crept

His son succeeded to his heritage
In rest and peace, after the marquis' day,
And wedded happily at proper age,
Albeit he tried his wife not so they say
This world is not so harsh deny who may,
As in old times that now are long since gone,
And hearken what this author says thereon

—

But just that everyone, in his degree,
Should be as constant in adversity
As was Griselda, for that Petrarch wrote
This tale, and in a high style, as you ll note

For since a woman once was so patient

As James says, if you his epistle read,
Yet does He prove folk at all times, indeed,

And suffers us, for our good exercise,
With the sharp scourges of adversity
To be well beaten oft, in sundry wise,
Not just to learn our will, for truly He,
Ere we were born, did *all* our *frailty* see;

That it was deyntee for to seen the chere
Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met y-fere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,
And strepen hir out of hir rude array,
And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
With a coroune of many a riche stoon
Up-on hir heed, they in-to halle hir broghte,
And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
For every man and womman dooth his might
This day in murthe and revel to dispende
Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light
For more solempne in every mannes sight
This feste was, and gretter of costage,
Than was the revel of hir mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
Liven thise two in concord and in reste,
And richely his doghter maried he
Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste
Of al Itaille, and than in pees and reste
His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth

His sone succedeth in his heritage

And herkneth what this auctour seith therfore

This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,
For it were importable, though they
wolde,
But for that every wight, in his degree,
Sholde be constant in adversitee
As was Grisilde, therfor Petrark wryteth
This storie, which with heigh style he endyteth.

For, sith a womman was so pacient
Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte
Receyven al in gree that god us sent,
For greet skile is, he preve that he wroghte.
But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
As seith seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede,
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede,

And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse,
Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,
Er we were born, knew al our freletee,

And for our beste is al his governaunce,
Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce [1]

But for our good is all that He doth give
So then in virtuous patience let us live [1]

But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go —
It were ful hard to finde now a dayes

But one word masters hearken ere I go
One hardly can discover nowadays
In all a town Griseldas three or two

I will rather break in two than bend say I

But now for love of the good wife of Bath,
Whose life and all whose sex may God maintain

THE ENVOY OF CHAUCER

Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,
And bothe atones buried in Itaille,
For which I crye in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be t'assaille
His wyves pacience, in hope to finde
Grisildes, for in certein he shall faille!

Griselda's dead and dead is her patience,
In Italy both lie buried says the tale,
For which I cry in open audience
That no man be so hardy as to assail
His own wife s patience in a hope to find
Griselda for 'tis certain he shall fail!

O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille,
Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
To wryte of yow a storie of swich mervaille
As of Grisildis pacient and kinde,
Lest Chichevache[2] yow swelwe in hir entraille!

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,
But evere answereth at the countretaille,
Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,
But sharply tak on yow the governaille
Emprinteth wel this lesson in your minde
For commune profit, sith it may availle

And well impress this lesson on your mind
For common profit since it may avail

Ye archewyves, stondeth at defence,

Strong minded women stand at your defence,
Since you are strong as camel and don t ail
Suffer no man to do to you offence
And slender women in a contest frail
Be savage as a tiger there in Ind
Clatter like mill say I to beat the male

No dreed hem nat, do hem no reverence,

Nay fear them not nor do them reverence,

[1] It seems to have been Chaucer s intention in the first instance to end this Tale here Hence we find in MSS E Hn Cm Dd the following genuine but rejected stanza suitable for insertion at th s point

Behold the merry words of the Host

This worthy Clerk whan ended was h tale
Our hoste seyde and swoor by godde
Me were lever than a barel ale
My wyf at hoom had herd this legend
This is a gentil tale for the nones
As to my purpos wiste ye my wille
But thing that wol nat be lat it be sti

[2] A fabulous monster in medieval satires that fed on patient wives, and was therefore very lean

A d you sha l make h m co ch as does a
qua l

If you are fa r to see in folks presence
Show them your face and with your clothes regale
If you are fou l be lavish of expense
To gain friends never cease to do travail
Be lightsome as a linden leaf in wind
And let him worry weep and wring and
wail!

For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille,
In jalousye I rede eek thou him binde,
And thou shalt make him couche as dooth a
quaille

And lat him care, and wepe, and wringe, and
waille!

HERE ENDETH THE CLERK OF OXENFORD HIS TALE

THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE MERCHANT'S TALE

For well I know that it is so with me
I have a wife the worst one that can be
For though the foul Fiend to her wedded were,
She d overmatch him this I dare to swear

We wedded men in sorrow l ve and care
Try it who w ll and he shall truly find

These *past two months* and no day more by gad
And yet I think that he whose days al ve
Have been all wifeless although men should
rive
Him to the heart he could in no wise clear
Tell you so much of sorrow as I here
Could tell you of my spouse s cursedness
Now said our host merchant so God you
bless

'WEPING and wayling, care, and other sorwe
I know y nogh, on even and a morwe,'
Quod the Marchaunt, and so don othere mo
That wedded been, I trowe that it be so
For, wel I woot, it fareth so with me
I have a wyf, the worste that may be,
For thogh the feend to hir y coupled were,
She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel swere
What sholde I yow reherce in special
Hir hye malice? she is a shrewe at al
Ther is a long and large difference
Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience
And of my wyf the passing crueltee
Were I unbounden, al so moot I theel
I wolde never eft comen in the snare
We wedded men live in sorwe and care,
Assaye who-so wol and he shal finde
I seye sooth, by seint Thomas of Inde,
As for the more part, I sey nat alle
God shilde that it sholde so bifalle!
A! good sir hoost! I have y wedded be
Thise monthes two, and more nat, pardee,
And yet I trowe, he that all his lyve
Wyflees hath been, though that men wolde him
ryve
Un to the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here
Coude tellen of my wyves cursednesse!'
Now, quod our hoost, Marchaunt, so god
yow blesse,
Sin ye so muchel knowen of that art,
Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part'
Gladly, quod he, but of myn owene sore,
For sory herte, I telle may na more

THE MERCHANT'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE MERCHANT'S TALE

Whylom ther was dwellinge in Lumbardye
A worthy knight, that born was of Pavye,
In which he lived in greet prosperitee,
And sixty yeer a wyflees man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delyt
On wommen, ther as was his appetyt,
As doon thise foles that ben seculeer
And whan that he was passed sixty yeer,
Were it for holinesse or for dotage,
I can nat seye, but swich a greet corage,
Hadde this knight to been a wedded man,
That day and night he dooth al that he can
T'espyen where he mighte wedded be,
Preyinge our lord to granten him, that he
Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf
That is bitwixe an housbond and his wyf,

Once on a time there dwelt in Lombardy
One born in Pavia a knight worthy,
And there he lived in great prosperity,
And sixty years a wifeless man was he,
And followed ever his bodily delight
In women whereof was his appetite
As these fool laymen will so it appears
And when he had so passed his sixty years,
Were it for piety or for dotage

They live but as a bird does or a beast,
In liberty and under no arrest
Whereas a wedded man in his high state

For who can be so buxom as a wyf?
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf
To kepe him, syk and hool, as is his make?
For wele or wo, she wol him nat forsake
She nis nat wery him to love and serve,

And yet some writers say it is not so
And Theophrastus is one such I know
What odds though Theophrastus chose to lie?

As for to spare in houshold thy dispence,
A trewe servant dooth more diligence,
Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene wyf

For she will claim a half part all her life,
And if you should be sick so God me save
Your true friends or an honest serving knave
Will keep you better than she that waits I say,
After your wealth and has *done many a day*
And if you take a wife to have and hold
Right easily may you become cuckold
This judgment and a hundred such things worse
Did this man write may *God his dead* bones curse!
But take no heed *of all such* vanity
Defy old Theophrastus and hear me
  A wife is God s own gift aye verily
All other kinds of gifts most certainly
As lands rents *pasture rights in common land,*
Or moveables in gift of Fortune stand
And pass away like shadows on the wall
But without doubt if plainly speak I shall
A wife will last and in your house endure
Longer than you would like peradventure
  But marriage is a solemn sacrament
Who has no wife I hold on ruin bent
He lives in helplessness all desolate
I speak of folk in secular *estate*
And hearken why I say not this for naught
It s because woman was for man s help wrought
The High God when He d Adam *made* all rude,
And saw him *so alone and* belly nude
God of His *goodness* thus to speak began
  Let us now make a help meet for this man
Like to himself And then he made him Eve
Here may you see and here prove I believe
A wife *is a* man s help and his *comfort*
His earthly paradise and *means* of sport
So docile and so virtuous is she
That they must needs live in all *harmony*
One flesh they are *and one flesh, as I guess,*
Has but one heart in weal and in distress
  A wife! Ah Holy Mary *ben cite!*
How may a man have any adversity
Who has a wife? Truly I cannot say
The bliss that is between such two for aye
No tongue can tell nor any heart can think
If he be poor why she helps him to swink
She keeps his money and never *wastes a deal*
All that her husband wishes she likes well
She never once says nay when he says yea '
  Do this says he All ready sir she ll say
O blissful state of wedlock *prized and* dear
So pleasant and so full of virtue clear
So much approved and praised as fortune s peak,
That every man who holds him worth a leek
Upon his bare knees *ought* through all his life
To give *God* thanks, Who s sent to him a wife,
Or else he should pray God that He will send
A wife to him to last till his life s end
For then h s life is set in certainness
He cannot be deceived as *I may guess,*
So that he act according as she s said
Then may he boldly carry high his head
They are so true and therwithal so wise,
Wherefore, if you *will do as do the wise,*
Then aye as women counsel be your deed

For she wol clayme half *part al* hir lyf,
And if that thou be syk, so god me save,
Thy verray frendes or a trewe knave
Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth ay
After thy good, *and hath* don many a day "
And if thou take a wyf un to thyn hold, [9180a]
Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold [*b*]
This sentence, and an hundred thinges worse,
Wryteth this man, ther god his bones corse!
But take no kepe of al swich vanitee,
Deffye Theofraste and herke me
  A wyf is goddes yifte verraily;
Alle other maner yiftes hardily,
As londes, rentes, pasture, *or commune,*
Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune,
That passen as a shadwe upon a wal
But dredelees, if pleynly speke I shal,
A wyf wol laste, and in thyn *hous* endure,
Wel lenger than *thee* list, paraventure.
  Mariage is a ful gret sacrement,
He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent;
He liveth helplees and al desolat,
I speke of folk in seculer estaat
And herke why, I sey nat this for noght,
That womman is for mannes help y-wroght.
The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked,
And saugh him al allone, bely naked,
God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,
"Lat us now make an help un to this man
Lyk to him self ', and thanne he made him Eve.
Heer may ye se, and heer by may ye preve,
That wyf *is mannes help* and his confort,
His paradys *terrestre* and his disport
So buxom and so vertuous is she,
They moste nedes live in unitee
O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse,
Hath but on herte, in wele and in distresse
  A wyf! a! Seinte Marie, *ben'cite!*
How mighte a man han any adversitee
That hath a wyf? certes, I can nat seye
The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye
Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke
If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke,
She kepeth his good, and *wasteth never* a deel,
Al that hir housbonde lust, hir lyketh weel,
She seith not ones nay," when he seith "ye "
"Do this," seith he, "al redy, sir" seith she
O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,
Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,
And so commended and appreved eek,
That every man that halt him worth a leek,
Up-on his bare knees oghte al his *lyf*
Thanken his god *that him hath sent* a wyf,
Or elles preye to god him for to sende
A wyf, to laste un to his lyves ende
For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse,
He may *nat be deceyved,* as I gesse,
So that he werke after his wyves reed,
Than may he boldly beren up his heed,
They been so trewe and ther-with al so *wyse,*
For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse,
Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede

Lo how that Jacob as thise clerkes rede,
By good conseil of his moder Rebekke
Bond the kides skin aboute his nekke
Thrugh which his fadres benisoun he wan
Lo Judith as the storie eek telle can

By good conseil delivered out of wo

Suffre thy wyves tonge as Caton b t
She shal comande and thou shalt suffren it
And yet she wol obeye of curteisye
A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye
Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe
Ther as ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe
I warne thee if wysly thou wolt wirche

d be god that it shal been amended!
For I wol be certeyn a wedded man
And that anoon in al the haste I can
Un to som mayde fair and tendre of age
I prey yow shapeth for my mariage
Al sodeynly for I wol nat abyde
And I wol fonde t espyen on my syde
To whom I may be wedded hastily
But fo

Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful fayn.
Bet is quod he a pyk than a pikerel
And bet than old boef is the tendre veel.
I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,
It is but bene-straw and greet forage

Lo Ab gail by good adv e no vs e
D d save her husband Nabal when that he
Should have been sla n and lo Esther also
By good adv ce del vered out of woe
The people of God and got h m Mordeca
By K ng Ahasuerus l fted h gh
There is no pleasure so superlative

A w fe is keeper of your husbandry

To cher sh her or you shall never th e

I p ay you or my marr age a prepare
And do so now for I will not ab de
And I will try to find one on my s de
To whom I may be wedded speedily
But for as much as you are more than I

pla n
Of old fish and young flesh I am full fa n

And these old widows, God knows that, afloat,
They know so much of spells when on Wade's[1] boat,
And do such petty harm, when they think best,
That with one should I never live at rest
For several schools can make men clever clerks,
Woman in many schools learns clever works.
But certainly a young thing men may guide,
Just as warm wax may with one's hands be plied
Wherefore I tell you plainly, in a clause,
I will not have an old wife, for that cause.
For if it chanced I made that sad mistake
And never in her could my pleasure take,
My life I'd lead then in adultery
And go straight to the devil when I die
No children should I then on her beget,
Yet would I rather hounds my flesh should fret
Than that my heritage descend and fall
Into strange hands, and this I tell you all
I dote not, and I know the reason why
A man should *marry*, and furthermore know I
There speaks full many a man of all marriage
Who knows no more of it than knows my page,
Nor for what reasons man should take a wife
If one *may not live chastely all his life*
Let him take wife whose quality he s known
For lawful procreation of his own
Blood children, to the honour of God above,
And not alone *for passion or for love*,
And because lechery they should eschew
And do their family duty when it's due,
Or because each of them should help the other
In trouble, as a sister shall a brother,
And live in chastity full decently
But, sirs, and by your leave, that is not I
For, God be thanked I dare to make a vaunt,
I feel my limbs are strong and fit to jaunt
In doing all man's are expected to,
I know myself and know what I can do
Though I am hoar, I fare as does a tree
That blossoms ere the fruit be *grown, you see*
A blooming tree is neither *dry* nor dead
And I feel nowhere hoary but on head,
My heart and all my limbs are still as green
As laurel through the year is to be seen
And now that you have heard all my intent,
I pray that to my wish you will assent '
Then divers men to him diversely told,
Of marriage, many an instance known of old
Some blamed it and some praised it, that's certain,
But at the last, and briefly to make plain,
Since altercation follows soon or late
When friends begin such matters to debate,
There fell a strife between his brothers two,
Whereof the name of one was Placebo
And verily Justinus was that other
Placebo said "O *January*, brother,
Full little need had you, my lord so dear,
Counsel to ask of anyone that's here,
Save that you are so full of sapience
That you like not, what of your high prudence,

And eek thise olde widwes, god it woot,
They conne so muchel craft on Wade's[1] boot,
So muchel broken harm, whan that hem leste,
That with hem sholde I never live in reste.
For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis,
Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.
But certeynly, a yong thing may men gye,
Right as men may warm wex with handes plye.
Wherfore I sey yow pleynly, in a clause,
I wol non old wyf han right for this cause.
For if so were, I hadde swich mischaunce,
That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce,
Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,
And go streight to the devel, whan I dye.
Ne children sholde I none up-on hir geten;
Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,
Than that myn heritage sholde falle
In straunge hand, and this I tell yow alle.
I dote nat, I woot the cause why
Men sholde wedde, and forthermore wot I,
Ther speketh many a man of mariage,
That woot na-more of it than woot my page,
For whiche causes man sholde take a wyf.
If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,
Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,
By-cause of leveful procreacioun
Of children, to th'onour of god above,
And *nat* only *for paramour or love*,
And for they sholde lecherye eschue,
And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben due,
Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen other
In meschief, as a suster shal the brother,
And live in chastitee ful holily
But sires, by your leve, that am nat I.
For god be thanked, I dar make avaunt,
I fele my limes stark and suffisaunt
To do al that a man bilongeth to,
I woot my-selven best what I may do.
Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree
That blosmeth er that fruyt y-woxen be,
A blosmy tree nis neither drye ne deed
I fele me nowher hoor but on myn heed,
Myn herte and alle my limes been as grene
As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene
And sin that ye han herd al myn entente,
I prey yow to my wil ye wole assente."
Diverse men diversely him tolde
Of mariage manye ensamples olde
Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, certeyn,
But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,
As al day falleth altercacioun
Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun,
Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,
Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,
Justinus soothly called was that other.
Placebo seyde, "o *Januarie*, brother,
Ful litel nede had ye, my lord so dere,
Conseil to axe of any that is here,
But that ye been so ful of sapience,
That yow ne lyketh, for your heighe prudence,

[1] In Teutonic mythology, a giant, regarded as a storm or sea demon On his ship he could pass from place to place instantaneously

I never hem contraried, trewely,
I woot wel that my lord can more than I.
What that he seith, I holde it ferme and stable;
I seye the same, or elles thing semblable.
A ful gret fool is any conseillour,
That serveth any lord of heigh honour,
That dar presume, or elles thenken it,
That his conseil sholde passe his lordes wit.
Nay, lordes been no foles, by my fay;
Ye han your-selven shewed heer to-day

N in al Itaille, that coude bet han sayd,
Crist halt him of this conseil wel
apayd.
And trewely, it is an heigh corage
Of any man, that stapen is in age,

Justinus, that ay stille sat and herde,
Right in this wyse to Placebo answerde
"Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye,
Sin ye han seyd, and herkneth what I seye.
Senek among his othere wordes wyse
Seith, that a man oghte him right wel avyse,
To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel
And sin I oghte avyse me right wel
To whom I yeve my good awey fro me,
Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be
To whom I yeve my body, for alwey
I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley
To take a wyf *with-oute avysement*
Men moste enquere, this is myn assent,
Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles other-weys a shrewe,

To vary from the word of Solomon
This word said he to each and every one"

I have stood well, and in full great degree,
With many lords of very high estate,
Yet ne'er with one of them had I debate.

And dares presume to say, or else think it,
His counsel can surpass his lordship's wit

praised
And truthfully, it argues high courage

For, finally, I hold that for the best"
Justinus, who sat still and calm, and heard,

And all this leisure asks to see and hear.

For God knows I have wept full many a tear
In privity since I have had a wife
Praise whoso will a wedded man's good life,
Truly I find in it but cost and care
And many duties, of all blisses bare
And yet God knows my neighbours round about,
Especially the women many a rout,
Say that I've married the most steadfast wife,
Aye and the meekest one there is in life
But I know best where pinches me my shoe.
You may, for me do as you please to do
But take good heed, since you're a man of age,
How you shall enter into a marriage
Especially with a young wife and a fair
By Him Who made the water earth and air,
The youngest man there is in all this rout
Is busy enough to bring the thing about
That he alone shall have his wife trust me
You'll not be able to please her through years three,
That is to say to give all she desires.
A wife attention all the while requires
I pray you that you be not offended
Well? asked this January And have you said?
A straw for Seneca and your proverbs!
I value not a basketful of herbs
Your schoolmen's terms for wiser men than you
As you have heard assent and bid me do
My purpose now Placebo what say ye?
I say it is a wicked man said he
"That hinders matrimony certainly"
And with that word they *rose up suddenly*
Having assented fully that he should
Be wedded when he pleased and where he would
Imagination and his eagerness
Did in the soul of January press
As he considered marriage for a space
Many fair shapes and many a lovely face
Passed through his amorous fancy night by night
As who might take a mirror polished bright
And set it in the common market place
And then should see full many a figure pace
Within the mirror just in that same wise
Did January within his thought surmise
Of maidens whom he dwelt in town beside
He knew not where his fancy might abide
For if the one have beauty of her face
Another stands so in the people's grace
For soberness and for benignity
That all the people's choice she seems to be,
And some were rich and had an evil name
Nevertheless half earnest half in game
He fixed at last upon a certain one
And let all others from his heart be gone
And chose her on his own authority
For love is always blind and cannot see
And when in bed at night why then he wrought
To portray in his heart and in his thought
Her beauty fresh and her young age so tender
Her middle small her two arms long and slender,
Her management full wise her gentleness
Her womanly *bearing and her seriousness*
And when to her at last his choice descended

For god it woot, I have wept many a tere
Ful prively, sin I have had a wyf
Preyse who-so wole a wedded mannes lyf,
Certein, I finde in it but cost and care,
And observances, of alle blisses bare
And yet, god woot, my neighebores aboute,
And namely of wommen many a route,
Seyn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,
And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf
But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho
Ye mowe, for me, right as yow lyketh do,
Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age,
How that ye entren in to mariage,
And namely with a yong wyf and a fair
By him that made water, erthe, and air,
The yongest man that is in al this route
Is bisy y-nogh to bringen it aboute
To han his wyf allone, trusteth me
Ye shul nat plese hir fully yeres three,
This is to seyn, to doon hir ful plesaunce
A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce
I prey yow that ye be nat yvel apayd"
"Wel," quod this Januarie, "and hastow sayd?
Straw for thy Senek, and for thy proverbes,
I counte nat a panier ful of herbes
Of scole-termes, wyser men than thow,
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now
To my purpos, Placebo, what sey ye?"
"I seye, it is a cursed man," quod he,
"That letteth matrimoine, sikerly,"
And with that word they rysen sodeynly,
And been assented fully, that he sholde
Be wedded whanne him list and wher he wolde.
Heigh fantasye and curious bisinesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
Of Januarie aboute his mariage
Many fair shap, and many a fair visage
Ther passeth thurgh his herte, night by night.
As who-so toke a mirour polished bright,
And sette it in a commune market place,
Than sholde he see many a figure pace
By his mirour, and, in the same wyse,
Gan Januarie in with his thoght devyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him bisyde
He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde
For if that oon have beautee in hir face,
Another stant so in the peples grace
For hir sadnesse, and hir benignitee,
That of the peple grettest voys hath she
And somme were riche, and hadden badde name
But nathelees, bitwixe ernest and game,
He atte laste apoynted him on oon,
And leet alle othere from his herte goon,
And chees hir of his owene auctoritee,
For love is blind al day, and may nat see
And whan that he was in his bed y-broght,
He purtreyed, in his herte and in his thoght,
Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,
Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and sclendre,
Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,
Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse.
And whan that he on hir was condescended,

Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben amended.
For whan that he him-self concluded hadde,
Him thoughte ech other mannes wit so badde,

He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and some.
Nedeth na-more for him to go ne ryde,
He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde
  Placebo cam, and eek his freendes sone,
And alderfirst he bad hem alle a bone,

Al were it so she were of smal degree,
Suffyseth him hir youthe and hir beautee
Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to his wyf,
To lede in ese and holinesse his lyf
And thanked god, that he mighte han hire al,
That no wight of his blisse parten shal.
And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,
And shapen that he faille nat to spede,
For thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at ese
"Thanne is," quod he, "no-thing may me displese,
Save o thing priketh in my conscience,
The which I wol reherce in your presence
  I have," quod he, "herd seyd, ful yore ago,

And so greet ese and lust in mariage,
That ever I am agast, now in myn age,

please,

As all these wedded men do with their wives
Come to the bliss where Christ Eternal lives?

Often, and sooner than a single man!
And therefore, sir, this is the best I can
Despair not, but retain in memory,
Perhaps she may your purgatory be!
She may be God's tool, she may be God's whip,
Then shall your spirit up to Heaven skip
Swifter than does an arrow from the bow!
I hope to God, hereafter you shall know
That there is none so great felicity
In marriage, no nor ever shall there be,
To keep you from salvation that's your own,
So that you use, with reason that's well known,
The charms of your wife's body temperately,
And that you please her not too amorously,
And that you keep as well from other sin
My tale is done now, for my wit is thin
Be not deterred hereby, my brother dear'—
(But let us pass quite over what's said here
The wife of Bath if you have understood,
Has treated marriage, in its likelihood,
And spoken well of it in little space)—
"Fare you well now, God have you in His grace"
And with that word this Justin and his brother
Did take their leave and each of them from other
For when they all saw that it must needs be,
They so arranged by sly and wise treaty,
That she this maiden, who was Maia hight,
As speedily indeed as ever she might,
Should wedded be unto this January
I think it were too long a time to tarry
To tell of deed and bond between them and
The way she was enfeoffed of all his land
Or to hear tell of all her rich array
But finally was come the happy day
When to the church together they two went,
There to receive the holy sacrament
Forth came the priest with stole about his
neck
Saying of Rebecca and Sarah she should reck
For wisdom and for truth in her marriage,
And said his orisons, as is usage,
And crossed them, praying God that He should
bless,
And made all tight enough with holiness
Thus are they wedded with solemnity,
And at the feast are sitting, he and she,
With other worthy folk upon the dais
All full of joy and bliss the palace gay is,
And full of instruments and viandry,
The daintiest in all of Italy
Before them played such instruments anon
That Orpheus or Theban Amphion
Never in life made such a melody
With every course there rose loud minstrelsy,
And never Joab sounded trump, to hear,
Nor did Theodomas, one half so clear
At Thebes, while yet the city hung in doubt
Bacchus the wine poured out for all about,
And Venus gaily laughed for every wight
For January had become her knight,
And would make trial of his amorous power
In liberty and in the bridal bower,

Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!
And therfore, sire, the beste reed I can,
Dispeire yow noght, but have in your memorie,
Paraunter she may be your purgatorie!
She may be goddes mene, and goddes whippe;
Than shal your soule up to hevene skippe
Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe!
I hope to god, her-after shul ye knowe,
That their nis no so greet felicitee
In mariage, ne never-mo shal be,
That yow shal lette of your savacioun,
So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,
The lustes of your wyf attemprely,
And that ye plese hir nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe yow eek from other sinne.
My tale is doon —for my wit is thinne.
Beth nat agast her-of, my brother dere"—
(But lat us waden out of this matere
The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which we have on honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space) —
"Fareth now wel, god have yow in his grace"
And with this word this Justin and his brother
Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of other
For whan they sawe it moste nedes be,
They wroghten so, by sly and wys tretee,
That she, this mayden, which that Maius highte,
As hastily as ever that she mighte,
Shal wedded be un-to this Januarie
I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,
If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,
By which that she was feffed in his lond,
Or for to herknen of hir riche array
But finally y-comen is the day
That to the chirche bothe be they went
For to receyve the holy sacrement
Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his
nekke,
And bad hir be lyk Sarra and Rebekke,
In wisdom and in trouthe of mariage,
And seyde his orisons, as is usage,
And crouched hem, and bad god sholde hem
blesse,
And made al siker y-nogh with holinesse
Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,
And at the feste sitteth he and she
With other worthy folk up-on the deys.
Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleys,
And ful of instruments and of vitaille,
The moste deyntevous of al Itaille
Biforn hem stoode swiche instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,
Ne maden never swich a melodye.
At every cours than cam loud minstralcye,
That never tromped Joab, for to here,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clere,
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacus the wyn hem skinketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth up-on every wight.
For Januarie was bicome hir knight,
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertee, and eek in mariage,

And with hir fyrbrond in hir hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route
And certeinly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymenēus, that god of wedding is,
Saugh never his lyf so mery a wedded man

Quene Ester loked never with swich an yē
On Assuer, so meke a look hath she

And thoughte, "allas! o tendre creature!
Now wolde god ye mighte wel endure
Al my corage, it is so sharp and kene,
I am agast ye shul it nat sustene
But god forbede that I dide al my might!

The tyme cam that reson was to
ryse,

Hold thou thy peace thou poet Marcian
Who tellest how Philology was wed

There is such mirth that no one may it show,
Try it yourself and then you well will know
Whether I lie or not in matters here
Maia she sat there with so gentle cheer,
To look at her it seemed like faery
Queen Esther never looked with such an eye

January was rapt into a trance

And thought Alas! O tender young creature!
Now would God you may easily endure
All my desire it is so sharp and keen

And at the last he laboured all in a
As best he might for manners there in hall,
To haste them from the feast in subtle wise
Time came when it was right that they should
rise

AUTHOR

O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw bredeth!
O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!
O servant traitour, false hoomly hewe,

O parlous fire that in the bedstraw breeds!
O foe familiar that his service speeds!
O treacherous servant, false domestic who

Is most like adder in bosom, sly, untrue,
God shield us all from knowing aught of you!
O January, drunk of pleasure's brew
In marriage, see how now your Damian,
... own trained personal squire, born your man

On the horizon, in that ...
Night with his mantle, which is dark and rude,
Did overspread the hemisphere about,
And so departed had this joyous rout
From January, with thanks on every side
Home to their houses happily they ride,
... please them best,
...st

...age,

...ne,

Not one of all of them ...
And to his friends most intimate said he
'For God's love, and as soon as it may be,
Let all now leave this house in courteous wise."
And all they rose, just as he bade them rise
... good night, and curtains drew anon,
... stone,
... blessed,

...ide
He soothed her, and ... and oft,
With the thick bristles of his beard not soft,
But sharp as briars like a dogfish skin,
For he'd been badly shaved ere he came in
He stroked and rubbed her on her tender face,
And said "Alas! I fear I'll do trespass
Against you here, my spouse, and much offend
Before the time when I will down descend
But nonetheless, consider this," said he,
'There is no workman, whosoe'er he be,
That may work well if he works hastily,
This will be done at leisure, perfectly
It makes no difference how long we two play,
For in true wedlock were we tied today,
And blessed be the yoke that we are in,
For in our acts, now, we can do no sin
A man can do no sin with his own wife
Nor can he hurt himself with his own knife,
For we have leave most lawfully to play"
Thus laboured he till came the dawn of day,
And then he took in wine a sop of bread,
And upright sat within the marriage bed,
And after that he sang full loud and clear
And kissed his wife and made much wanton cheer
He was all coltish, full of venery,

Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly untrewe,
God shilde us alle from your aqueyntaunce!
O Januarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man,
... for to do thee vileinye.

... ne.
He drinketh ipocras, ...
Of spyces hote, t'encresen his corage,
And many a letuarie hadde he ful fyn,
Swiche as the cursed monk dan Constantyn
Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*,
To eten hem alle, he nas no-thing eschu
And to his privee freendes thus seyde he
"For goddes love, as sone as it may be,
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse"
And they han doon right as he wol devyse.
Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon,
The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille as stoon,
And whan the bed was with the preest y-blessed,
Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed.
And Januarie hath faste in armes take
His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
He lulleth hir, he kisseth hir ful ofte
With thikke bristles of his berd unsofte,
Lyk to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere,
For he was shave al newe in his manere
He rubbeth hir aboute hir tendre face,
And seyde thus, "allas! I moot trespace
To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly offende,
Er tyme come that I wil doun descende
But nathelees, considereth this," quod he,
"Ther nis no werkman, what-so-ever he be,
That may bothe werke wel and hastily;
This wol be doon at leyser parfitly
It is no fors how longe that we pleye,
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye,
And blessed bye the yok that we been inne,
For in our actes we mowe do no sinne.
A man may do no sinne with his wyf,
Ne hurte him-selven with his owene knyf,
For we han leve to pleye us by the lawe"
Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe,
And than he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,
And upright in his bed than sitteth he,
And after that he sang ful loude and clere,
And kiste his wyf, and made wantoun chere,
He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,

And ful of jargon as a flekked pye
The slakke skin aboute his nekke shaketh
Whyl that he sang so chaunteth he and craketh
But god wot what that May thoughte in hir
  herte

heart
When up she sa h m s tt ng in h s sh rt
In h s n ghtcap and w th h s neck so lean

Now day is come I may no lenger wake
And doun he leyde his heed and sleep til pryme

For every labour som tyme moot han reste,
Or elles longe may he nat endure
This is to seyn no lyves creature
Be it of fish or brid or beest or man

Fo every wo ker somet me must have rest,
Or else for long he ll certa nly not thrive
Tha s to say no creature that s al ve
Be t of fish or b rd or beast or man

AUTHOR

Answer to my demand n th s your case

This syke Damian n Venus fyr

Th s lovesick Damian n Venus fire
So b rned he almost per shed for des re
Wh ch put h s l fe in danger I am sure
Longer n this wise could he not endure
But pr v ly a pen ca e d d he borrow
And n a letter wrote he all his sorro v

As custume is un to thise nobles alle
A bryde shal nat eten in the halle
Til dayes foure or three dayes atte leste
Y passed been than lat hir go to feste
The fourthe day compleet fro noon to
  noon
Whan that the he ghe masse was y-doon
In halle s t this Januarie and May
As fresh as s the brighte someres day
And so b fel how that this gode man
Remembred him upon this Damian
And seyde Se nte Marie how may this be
That Damian entendeth nat to me?

noon
Afte l e h gh Ma s had been sa d and done
In hall d d January s t w th May

u s p oper aut es st ll
There was no other cau e could make h m tarry

"That is a pity," said this January,
"He is a gentle squire, aye, by my truth!
If he should die, it were great harm and ruth,
As wise and secret, and discreet is he

Cheer him a bit, for he's a gentleman,
And tell him that I'll come to visit him
After I've rested—a short interim,
And get this over quickly, for I'll bide
Awake until you sleep there at my side"
And with that word he raised his voice to call
A squire, who served as marshal of his hall
And certain things he wished arranged were told
This lovely May then did her straight way hold,
With all her women, unto Damian
Down by his bed she sat, and so began
To comfort him with kindly word and glance
This Damian, when once he'd found his chance,
In secret wise his purse and letter too,
Wherein he'd said what he aspired to,
He put into her hand, with nothing more,
Save that he heaved a sigh both deep and sore,
And softly to her in this wise said he
"Oh, mercy! Don't, I beg you, tell on me,
For I'm but dead if this thing be made known,"
This purse she hid in bosom of her gown
And went her way, you get no more of me

And laid him down to sleep, and that anon

And down the privy quietly it cast
Who's *in* brown study now but fair fresh May?
Down by old January's side she lay,
Who slept, until the cough awakened him,
He prayed her strip all naked for his whim,
He would have pleasure of her, so he said,

Were it by destiny or merely chance,

"That me forthinketh," quod this Januarie,
"He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe!
If that he deyde, it were harm and routhe;
He is as wys, discreet, and as secree
As any man I woot of his degree,
And ther-to manly and eek servisable,
And for to been a thrifty man right able
But after mete, as sone as ever I may,
I wol my-self visyte him and eek May,
To doon him al the confort that I can"
And for that word him blessed every man,
That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,
He wolde so conforten in siknesse
His squyer, for it was a gentil dede
"Dame," quod this Januarie, "tak good hede,
At-after mete ye, with your wommen alle,
Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,
That alle ye go see this Damian;
Doth him disport, he is a gentil man,
And telleth him that I wol him visyte,
Have I no-thing but rested me a lyte;

And tolde him certeyn thinges, what he wolde
This fresshe May hath streight hir wey y-holde,
With alle hir wommen, un-to Damian
Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,
Confortinge him as goodly as she may.
This Damian, whan that his tyme he say,
In secree wise his purs, and eek his bille,
In which that he y-writen hadde his wille,
Hath put in to hir hand, with-outen more,
Save that he syketh wonder depe and sore,
And softely to hir right thus seyde he
"Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me;
For I am deed, if that this thing be kid."
This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hid,
And wente hir wey; ye gete namore of me.
But un-to Januarie y-comen is she,
That on his beddes syde sit ful softe
He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte,
And leyde him doun to slepe, and that anon.
She feyned hir as that she moste gon
Ther-as ye woot that every wight mot nede.
And whan she of this bille hath taken hede,
She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,
And in the privee softely it caste
Who studieth now but faire fresshe May?
Adoun by olde Januarie she lay,
That sleep, til that the coughe hath him awaked,
Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al naked,
He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som plesaunce,

Til evensong rong, and that they moste aryse.
Were it by destinee or aventure,

Were it by influence or by nature,
Or constellacion, that in swich estat
The hevene stood, that tyme fortunat
Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes
(For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes)
To any womman, for to gete hir love,
I can nat seye, but grete god above,
That knoweth that non act is causelees,
He deme of al, for I wol holde my pees

displese,
I rekke noght, for here I him assure,
To love him best of any creature,
Though he na more hadde than his sherte."
Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
Heer may ye se how excellent franchyse
In wommen is, whan they hem narwe avyse.
Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,
That hath an herte as hard as any stoon,
Which wolde han lete him sterven in the place

And taketh noght but only day and place,

And softly this lettre doun she threste
Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste
She taketh him by the hand, and harde him twiste
So secrely, that no wight of it wiste,
And bad him been al hool, and forth she wente
To Januarie, whan that he for hir sente
Up ryseth Damian the nexte morwe,
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe
He kembeth him, he proyneth him and pyketh,
He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh,

In honest wyse, as longeth to a knight,
Shoop him to live ful deliciously
His housinge, his array, as honestly
To his degree was maked as a kinges
Amonges othere of his honest thinges,

By nature or some other circumstance,
Or constellation's sign, that in such state
The heavens stood, the time was fortunate
To make request concerning Venus' works
(For there's a time for all things, say these clerks)
To any woman, to procure her love,

That from her heart she could not drive or ban
Remembrance of her wish to give him ease
"Certainly," thought she, "whom this may displease

And then to January went as low
As ever did a hound trained to the bow
He was so pleasant unto every man

He built a garden walled about with stone,
So fair a garden do I know of none
For, without doubt, I verily suppose
That he who wrote *The Romance of the Rose*

Disported there and made sweet melody
About that well and danced there, as men told
This noble knight, this January old,
Such pleasure had therein to walk and play,

And when he chose to pay court to his mate
In summer season, thither would he go
With May his wife, and no one but they two,
And divers things that were not done abed,
Within that garden there were done, tis said
And in this manner many a merry day
Lived this old January and young May
But worldly pleasure cannot always stay,
And January's joy must pass away

He made a gardin, walled al with stoon,
So fair a gardin woot I nowher noon
For out of doute, I verraily suppose,
That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose
Ne coude of it the beautee wel devyse,
Ne Priapus ne mighte nat suffyse,
Though he be god of gardins, for to telle
The beautee of the gardin and the welle,
That stood under a laurer alwey grene.
Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his quene,
Proserpina, and al hir fayërye
Disporten hem and maken melodye
Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.
This noble knight, this Januarie the olde,
Swich deintee hath in it to walke and pleye,
That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye
Save he him-self, for of the smale wiket
He bar alwey of silver a smal cliket,
With which, whan that him leste, he it unshette
And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette
In somer seson, thider wolde he go,
And May his wyf, and no wight but they two;
And thinges whiche that were nat doon a bedde,
He in the gardin parfourned hem and spedde.
And in this wyse, many a mery day,
Lived this Januarie and fresshe May
But worldly joye may nat alwey dure
To Januarie, ne to no creature

AUTHOR

O sudden chance, O Fortune, thou unstable,
Like to the scorpion so deceptive able
To flatter with thy mouth when thou wilt sting,
Thy tail is death, through thine envenoming
O fragile joy! O poison sweetly taint!

For sorrow of which in love he daily dies
Alas! This noble January free,

Would he that she were other's love or wife,
But dress in black and live in widow's state,
Lone as the turtle-dove that's lost her mate
But finally, after a month or twain

His jealousy, from which he never won
For this his passion was so outrageous

O sodeyn hap, o thou fortune instable,
Lyk to the scorpioun so deceivable,
That flaterest with thyn heed when thou wolt
stinge,
Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn enveniminge.
O brotil joye! o swete venim queynte!
O monstre, that so subtilly canst peynte
Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
That thou deceyvest bothe more and lesse!
Why hastow Januarie thus deceyved,
That haddest him for thy ful frend receyved?
And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise yën,
For sorwe of which desyreth he to dyen.
Allas! this noble Januarie free,
Amidde his lust and his prosperitee,
Is woxen blind, and that al sodeynly.
He wepeth and he wayleth pitously,
And ther-with-al the fyr of jalousye,
Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye,
So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn
That som man bothe him and hir had slayn.
For neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,
Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,
But ever live as widwe in clothes blake,
Soul as the turtle that lost hath hir make.
But atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,
His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye,
For whan he wiste it may noon other be,
He paciently took his adversitee,
Save, out of doute, he may nat forgoon
That he nas jalous evermore in oon,
Which jalousye it was so outrageous,

That neither in halle, n'in noon other hous,
Ne in noon other place, never the-mo,
He nolde suffre hir for to ryde or go,
But if that he had hand on hir alway,
For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,
That loveth Damian so benignely,
That she mot outher dyen sodeynly,
Or elles she mot han him as hir leste,
She wayteth whan hir herte wolde
  breste.
  Up-on that other syde Damian
Bicomen is the sorwefulleste man

But if that Januarie moste it here,
That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo
But nathelees, by wryting to and fro
And privee signes, wiste he what she mente,
And she knew eek the fyn of his entente

  O Januarie, what mighte it thee availle,
Thou mightest see as fer as shippes saille?
For also good is blind deceyved be,
As be deceyved whan a man may see
Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred yēn,

And Damian, that knew al hir entente,
The cliket countrefeted prively,
Ther nis na more to seye, but hastily
Som wonder by this cliket shal bityde,
Which ye shul heren, if ye wole abyde

That neither in his hall nor other house

That she must either swiftly die or she
Must have him as she willed her thirst to slake,
Biding her time she thought her heart would
  break
  And on the other side this Damian
Was now become the most disconsolate man

Nevertheless by writing to and fro
And secret signals, he knew what she meant,
And she too knew the aim of his intent

AUTHOR

  O January what might it now avail
Could your eyes see as far as ships can sail?
For it s as pleasant blind deceived to be

  This lovely May of whom I spoke before,
In warm wax made impression of the key
Her husband carried to the gate where he
In entering his garden often went
And Damian who knew all her intent

AUTHOR

Though they were strictly kept apart in all
They soon accorded whispering through a wall
Where none could have suspected any
  gate

u and I,

For by that Lord Who sits in Heaven above,
Far rather would I die upon a knife
Than do offence to you, my true, dear wife!
For God's sake think how I did choose you out,
And for no love of money, beyond doubt,
But only for the love you roused in me
And though I am grown old and cannot see,

I give it you, draw deeds to please you, pet,
This shall be done tomorrow ere sunset
So truly may God bring my soul to bliss,
I pray you first, in covenant, that we kiss
And though I'm jealous, yet reproach me not.
You are so deeply printed in my thought
That, when I do consider your beauty
And therewith all the unlovely age of me,
I cannot, truly, nay, though I should die,

heard,
Graciously January she answered,
But first and foremost she began to weep
"I have also,' said she, "a soul to keep,
As well as you, and also honour mine,
And of my wifehood that sweet flower divine
Which I assured you of, both safe and sound,
When unto you that priest my body bound,
Wherefore I'll answer you in this manner,
If I may by your leave, my lord so dear

I am a lady, not a wench of town
Why speak you thus? Men ever are untrue,
And woman have reproaches always new.

Com forth, my whyte spouse, out of doute,
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wyf!
No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf.
Com forth, and lat us taken our disport;
I chees thee for my wyf and my confort."
  Swiche olde lewed wordes used he,
On Damian a signe made she,
That he sholde go biforen with his cliket·
This Damian thanne hat opened the wiket,
And in he sturte, and that in swich manere,
That no wight mighte it see neither y here,
And stille he sit under a bush anoon
  This Januarie, as blind as is a stoon,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
In-to his fresshe gardin is ago,
And clapte to the wiket sodeynly.
  "Now, wyf," quod he, "heer nis but thou and I,
That art the creature that I best love.
For, by that lord that sit in heven above,
Lever ich hadde dyen on a knyf,
Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf!
For goddes sake, thenk how I thee chees,
Noght for no coveityse, douteless,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old, and may nat see,
Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow why.
Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne therby;
First, love of Crist, and to your-self honour,
And al myn heritage, toun and tour;
I yeve it yow, maketh chartres as yow leste;
This shal be doon to-morwe er sonne reste.
So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse,
I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse
And thogh that I be jalous, wyte me noght.
Ye been so depe enprented in my thoght,
That, whan that I considere your beautee,
And ther-with-al the unlykly elde of me
I may nat, certes, thogh I sholde dye,
Forbere to been out of your companye
For verray love, this is with-outen doute.
Now kis me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute."
  This fresshe May, whan she thise wordes
    herde,
Benignely to Januarie answerde,
But first and forward she bigan to wepe,
"I have," quod she, "a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also myn honour,
And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,
Which that I have assured in your hond,
Whan that the preest to yow my body bond,
Wherfore I wole answere in this manere
By the leve of yow, my lord so dere
I prey to god, that never dawe the day
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
If ever I do un-to my kin that shame,
Or elles I empeyre so my name,
That I be fals, and if I do that lakke,
Do strepe me and put me in a sakke,
And in the nexte river do me drenche
I am a gentil womman and no wenche
Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewe,
And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe.

Ye han non other contenance, I leve,
But speke to us of untrust and repreve "
And with that word she saugh wher Damian
Sat in the bush, and coughen she bigan,
And with hir finger signes made she,
That Damian sholde clumbe up on a tree,
That charged was with fruit, and up he wente,
For verraily he knew al hir entente,
And every signe that she coude make
Wel bet than Januarie, hir owene make
For in a lettre she had told him al
Of this matere, how he werchen shal
And thus I lete him sitte up-on the pyrie,
And Januarie and May rominge myrie
Bright was the day, and blew the firmament,
Phebus of gold his stremes doun hath sent
To gladen every flour with his warmnesse
He was that tyme *in Geminis*, as I gesse,
But litel fro his declinacioun
Of Cancer, Jovis exaltacioun
And so bifel, that brighte morwe tyde,
That in that gardin, in the ferther syde,
Pluto, that is the king of fayerye,
And many a lady in his companye,
Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne,
Ech after other, right as any lyne—
Whyl that she gadered floures in the mede,
In Claudian ye may the story rede,
How in his grisly carte he hir fette —
This king of fairye thanne adoun him sette
Up-on a bench of turves, fresh and grene,
And right anon thus seyde he to his quene
"My wyf," quod he, ' ther may no wight sey nay,
Th'experience so preveth every day
The treson whiche that wommen doon to man
Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I can
Notable of your untrouthe and brotilnesse
O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,
Fulfild of sapience and of worldly glorie,
Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reson can
Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man
'Amonges a thousand men yet fond I oon,
But of wommen alle fond I noon '
Thus seith the king that knoweth your wikkednesse,
And Jesus *filius Syrak* as I gesse,
Ne speketh of yow but selde reverence
A wilde fyr and corrupt pestilence
So falle up-on your bodies yet to-night!
Ne see ye nat this honurable knight,
By cause, allas! that he is blind and old,
His owene man shal make him cokewold,
Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree
Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,
Un to this olde blinde worthy knight
That he shal have ayeyn his eyen sight,
Whan that his wyf wold doon him vileinye,
Than shal he knowen al hir harlotrye
Both in repreve of hir and othere mo "
"Ye shal," quod Proserpyne, "wol ye so,

No reason or excuse have you I think
And so you harp on women who hoodwink."
And with that word she saw where Damian
Sat under bush to cough then she began,
And with her slender finger signs made she
That Damian should climb into a tree
That burdened was with fruit, and up he went,
For verily he knew her full intent
And understood each sign that she could make,
Better than January, her old rake
For in a letter she had told him all
Of how he should proceed when time should fall
And thus I leave him in the pear tree still
While May and January roam at will
Bright was the day and blue the firmament,
Phoebus his golden streamers down has sent
To gladden every flower with his warmness
He was that time in Gemini I guess
And but a little from his declination
Of Cancer which is great Jove s exaltation
And so befell in that bright morning tide,
That in this garden on the farther side,
Pluto who is the king of Faery
With many a lady in his company
Following his wife the fair Queen Proserpine,
Each after other straight as any line
(While she was gathering flowers on a mead,
In Claudian you may the story read
How in his grim car he had stolen her)—
This king of Faery sat down yonder
Upon a turfen bank all fresh and green
And right anon thus said he to his queen
My wife said he, there may no one say nay
Experience proves fully every day
The treason that these women do to man
Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can
To show your fickleness and lies Of which,
O Solomon wise and richest of the rich
Fulfilled of sapience and worldly glory
Well worth remembrance are thy words and story
By everyone who s wit and reason can
Thus goodness he expounds with praise of man
Among a thousand men yet found I one,
But of all women living found I none
Thus spoke the king that knew your wickedness
And Jesus son of Sirach as I guess
Spoke of you seldom with much reverence
A wild fire and a rotten pestilence
Fall on your bodies all before tonight!
Do you not see this honourable knight
Because alas! he is both blind and old
His own sworn man shall make him a cuckold,
Lo, there he sits the lecher in that tree
Now will I grant of my high majesty,
Unto this old and blind and worthy knight,
That he shall have again his two eyes sight,
Just when his wife shall do him villainy,
Then shall he know of all her harlotry
Both in reproach to her and others too
You shall " said Proserpine, if will you so;

Now by my mother's father's soul I swear

And bear him down who would them thus accuse
For lack of answer none of them shall die
Nay though a *man* see things with either eye,
Yet shall we women brazen shamelessly
And weep and swear and wrangle cleverly
So that you men shall stupid be as geese
What do I *care for your authorities*?
I know well that this Jew this Solomon
Found fools among us women many a one
But though he never found a good woman
Yet has *there* found full *many another* man
Women right true right good and virtuous
Witness all those that dwell *in* Jesus house
With martyrdom they proved their constancy
The *Gesta Romanorum* speak kindly
Of many wives both good and true also
But be not angry sir though it be so
That he said he had found no good woman,
I pray you take the meaning of the man
He meant that sovereign goodness cannot be
Except in God Who is the Trinity
Ah since of very God there is but one
Why do you make so much of Solomon?
What though he built a temple for God s house?
What though he were both rich and glorious?
So built he too a temple to false gods
How could he with the Law be more at odds?
By gad clean as his name you whitewash sir
He was a *lecher and* idolater

I value not of all the villainy
That you of women write a butterfly

I will not spare for any courtesy
To speak him ill who d wish us villainy
Dame said this Pluto be no longer *wroth*
I give it up but since I swore my oath

"I love you best and ever shall I know
And so about the alleys did he go
Till he had come at last to that pear tree

Now, by my modres sires soule I swere,
That I shal yeven hir suffisant answere,
And alle wommen after, for hir sake,
That, though they be in any gilt y take,
With face bold they shulle hem self excuse,
And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse
For lakke of answer, noon of hem shal dyen
Al hadde man seyn a thing with bothe his yën,
Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,
And wepe, and swere, and chyde subtilly,
So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees
What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I woot wel that this Jew, this Salomon,
Fond of us wommen *foles many oon*
But though that he ne fond no good wornman,
Yet hath ther founde many another man
Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertuous
Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristes hous,
With marturdom they preved hir constance
The Romayn gestes maken *remembrance*
Of many a verray trewe wyf also
But sire, ne be nat wrooth, *al be-it so*,
Though that he seyde he fond no good womman,
I prey yow take the sentence of the *man*,
He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee
Nis noon but god, *that sit in Trinitee*
Ey! for verray god, that nis but oon,
What make ye so muche *of Salomon*?
What though he made a temple, goddes hous?
What though he were riche and glorious?
So made he eek a temple of false goddis,
How mighte he do a thing that more forbode is?
Pardee, as faire as ye his name emplastre,
He was a lechour and an ydolastre,
And in his elde he verray god forsook
And if that god ne hadde, as seith the book,
Y spared him for his fadres sake, he sholde
Have lost his regne rather than he wolde
I sette noght of al the vileinye,
That ye of wommen wryte, a boterflye
I am a womman, nedes moot I speke,
Or elles swelle til myn herte breke
For sithen he seyde that we ben jangleresses,
As ever hool I mote brouke my tresses,
I shal nat spare, for no curteisye,
To speke him harm that wolde us vileinye"
"Dame," quod this Pluto, "be no lenger wrooth,
I yeve it up, but sith I swoor myn ooth
That I wolde graunten him his sighte ageyn,
My word shal stonde, I warne yow, certeyn
I am a king, it sit me noght to lye"
"And I," quod she, "a queene of fayërye
Hir answere shal she have, I undertake,
Lat us na more wordes heer of make
For sothe, I wol no lenger yow contrarie"
Now lat us turne agayn to Januarie,
That in the gardin with his faire May
Singeth, ful merier than the papejay,
"Yow love I best, and shal, and other noon"
So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon,
Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie,

Wher-as this Damian sitteth ful myrie
An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.
This fresshe May, that is so bright and shene,
Gan for to syke, and seyde, "allas, my syde!
Now sir," quod she, "for aught that may bityde,
I moste han of the peres that I see,

That coude climbe, allas! allas!" quod he,
"That I am blind."
"Ye, sir, no fors," quod she.
"But wolde ye vouche-sauf, for goddes sake,
The pyrie in with your armes for to take,

Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth,
I can nat glose, I am a rude man
And sodeynly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng
And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong,
To Januarie he gaf agayn his sighte,
And made him see, as wel as ever he mighte.
And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,
Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn
But on his wyf his thoght was evermo,
Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,
And saugh that Damian his wyf had dressed
In swich manere, it may nat ben expressed
But if I wolde speke uncurteisly
And up he yaf a roring and a cry
As doth the moder whan the child shal dye:
"Out! help! allas! harrow!" he gan to crye,
"O stronge lady store, what dostow?"
And she answerde, "sir, what eyleth yow?

Was no-thing bet to make yow to see
Than strugle with a man up-on a tree.
God woot, I dide it in ful good entente"
"Strugle!" quod he, "ye, algate in it wente!
God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth to dyen!

Wherein this Damian sat right merrily
On high, among the young leaves fresh and green
This blooming May, who was so bright of sheen,
Began to sigh, and said "Alas, my side!
Now, sir," said she, "no matter what betide,

"Yea, sir, no odds," said she,

So he stooped down, and on his back she stood,
And gave herself a twist and up went she
Ladies, I pray you be not wroth with me;
I cannot gloze, I'm an uncultured man
For of a sudden this said Damian

"Out! Help! Alas! Oh, help me!" he did cry,
"Outlandish, brazen woman, what do you do?"
And she replied "Why, sir, and what ails you?
Have patience, and do reason in your mind
That I have helped you for your two eyes blind
On peril of my soul, I tell no lies,

and with my two eyes, too,
And truth, I thought he did that thing to you."

"You are bewildered still, good sir," said she,
"Such thanks I have for causing you to see,
God help me if I'm not put out indeed
But by my father's soul, I thought to have seen
How Damian right over you did lean
And that your smock was pulled up to his breast "
"Yes, sir," said she, "you may think as seems best.
But, sir, a man that wakens out of sleep,
He cannot suddenly take note and keep
Of any thing, or see it perfectly,
Until he has recovered verily,
Just so a man that blinded long has been,
He cannot say that suddenly he's seen
So well, at first, when sight is new to him,
And it is other quite than what it seems
And he that misconstrues, why, he misdeems "
And now, good men, I pray you to be glad
For here I end my tale of January,
God bless us, and His Mother, Holy Mary!

"Ye maze, maze, gode sire," quod she,
"This thank have I for I have maad yow see,
Allas!" quod she, "that ever I was so kinde!"
"Now, dame," quod he, "lat al passe out of minde.
Com doun, my lief, and if I have missayd,
God help me so, as I am yvel apayd.
But, by my fader soule, I wende han seyn,
How that this Damian had by thee leyn,
And that thy smok had leyn up-on his brest "
"Ye, sire," quod she, "ye may wene as yow lest,
But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleep,
He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep
Up-on a thing, ne seen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed verraily;
Right so a man, that longe hath blind y-be,
Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-see,
First whan his sighte is newe come ageyn,
As he that hath a day or two y-seyn.
Til that your sighte y-satled be a whyle,
Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.
Beth war, I prey yow, for, by hevene king,
Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing,
And it is al another than it semeth
He that misconceyveth, he misdemeth "
And with that word she leep doun fro the tree
Thus Januarie, who is glad but he?
He kisseth hir, and clippeth hir ful ofte,
And on hir wombe he stroketh hir ful softe,
And to his palays hoom he hath hir lad
Now, gode men, I pray yow to be glad
Thus endeth heer my tale of Januarie,
God blesse us and his moder Seinte Marie!

HERE IS ENDED THE MERCHANT'S TALE OF JANUARY

EPILOGUE TO THE MERCHANT'S TALE

"Eh! By God's mercy!" cried our host Said he
"Now such a wife I pray God keep from me!
Behold what tricks, and lo, what subtleties
In women are For always busy as bees
Are they, us simple men thus to deceive,
And from the truth they turn aside and leave,
By this same merchant's tale it s proved, I feel,
But beyond doubt, as true as any steel
I have a wife, though poor enough she be,
But of her tongue a babbling shrew is she,
And she's a lot of other vices too

"Ey! goddes mercy!" seyde our Hoste tho,
"Now swich a wyf I pray god kepe me fro!
Lo, whiche sleightes and subtilitees
In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees
Ben they, us sely men for to deceyve,
And from a sothe ever wol they weyve,
By this Marchauntes Tale it preveth weel.
But doutelees, as trewe as any steel
I have a wyf, though that she povre be,
But of hir tonge a labbing shrewe is she,
And yet she hath an heep of vyces mo,
Ther-of no fors, lat alle swiche thinges go.
But, wite ye what? in conseil be it seyd,
Me reweth sore I am un-to hir teyd
For, and I sholde rekenen every vyce
Which that she hath, y-wis, I were to nyce,
And cause why, it sholde reported be
And told to hir of somme of this meynee;
Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,
Sin wommen connen outen swich chaffare;
And eek my wit suffyseth nat ther-to
To tellen al, wherfor my tale is do."

THE SQUIRE'S TALE

THE SQUIRE'S PROLOGUE

"Squier, com neer, if it your wille be,
And sey somwhat of love; for certes ye

Agayn your lust, a tale wol I telle.
Have me excused if I speke amis,
My wil is good, and lo, my tale is this."

HERE BEGINNETH THE SQUIRE'S TALE

lakked noght that longeth to a king
As of the secte of which that he was born
He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn,
And ther-to he was hardy, wys, and riche,
And pitĕous and just, alwey y-liche,

This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan
Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
Of whiche th'eldeste highte Algarsyf,
That other sone was cleped Cambalo

I sholde hir discryven every part.
I am non swich, I moot speeke as I can

As for the faith to which he had been born,
He kept its law to which he had been sworn,

I am none such, I must speak as I can
And so befell that, when this Cambinskan
Had twenty winters worn his diadem,
As he was wont from year to year, I deem,

What of the season and the springing green,
Full loudly sang their love and their affection,

Then would it occupy a summer's day
Besides, it needs not here that I apprise
Of every course the order of service

While this great king sat in his state that day,
Hearing his minstrels on their instruments play

And up he rode right to the highest board

According to his language was his cheer,
As men teach art of speech both there and here;
Albeit that I cannot ape his style,
Nor can I climb across so high a stile,
Yet say I this, as to his broad intent,
To this amounts the whole of what he meant,
If so be that I have it yet in mind
He said 'The king of Araby and Ind,
My liege lord on this great and festive day
Salutes you as he now best can and may,
And sends to you, in honour of your feast,
By me, that am prepared for your behest,

What for the seson and the yonge grene,
Ful loude songen hir affecciouns,
Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns
Agayn the swerd of winter kene and cold.
This Cambinskan, of which I have yow told,
In royal vestiment sit on his deys,
With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys,
And halt his feste, so solempne and so riche
That in this world ne was ther noon it liche
Of which if I shal tellen al th'array,
Than wolde it occupye a someres day;
And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse
At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.
I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,
Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes.
Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,
Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee holde,
That in this lond men recche of it but smal;
Ther nis no man that may reporten al
I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme,
And for it is no fruit but los of tyme,
Un-to my firste I wol have my recours.
And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,
Whyl that this king sit thus in his nobleye,
Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges pleye
Biforn him at the bord deliciously,
In at the halle-dore al sodeynly
Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of bras,
And in his hand a brood mirour of glas
Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,
And by his syde a naked swerd hanging,
And up he rydeth to the heighe bord.
In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word
For merveille of this knight, him to biholde
Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and
olde

With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce
As wel in speche as in contenaunce,
That Gawain, with his olde curteisye,
Though he were come ageyn out of Fairye,

And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it lere;
Al-be it that I can nat soune his style,
Ne can nat climben over so heigh a style,
Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
Thus muche amounteth al that ever he mente,
If it so be that I have it in minde
He seyde, "the king of Arabie and of Inde,
My lige lord, on this solempne day
Salueth yow as he best can and may,
And sendeth yow, in honour of your feste,
By me, that am al redy at your heste,

This stede of bras, that esily and wel
Can, in the space of o day naturel,
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,
Wher so yow list, in droghte or elles shoures,
Beren your body in-to every place
To which your herte wilneth for to pace
With-outen wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more
With-outen harm, til ye be ther yow
 leste,
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste;
And turne ayeyn, with wrything of a pin

This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,
Hath swich a might, that men may in it see
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Un-to your regne or to your-self also,

Your excellente doghter that is here,

That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
And answere him in his langage ageyn
And every gras that groweth up-on rote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do bote,
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.
 This naked swerd, that hangeth by my syde,

Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
To stroke *him with the platte in thilke place*
Ther he is hurt this is as muche to seyn

This knight is to his chambre lad anon,
And is unarmed and to mete y-set
 The presents been ful royally y-fet,
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,

This steed of brass, that easily and well
Can, in one natural day ('tis truth I tell),
That is to say, in four and twenty hours,
Where'er you please, in drought or else in showers,

quest,
Although you sleep upon his back, or rest,

Has power such that in it men may see
When there shall happen any adversity
Unto your realm, and to yourself also,
And openly who is your friend or foe.
More than all this, if any lady bright

And answer him in his own words again.

Strike him upon the wound and it will close,

And was unarmed, and there at meat sat down
 The gifts were brought and royally were shown
That is to say, the sword and glass of power,

And borne anon into the donjon tower
By certain officers detailed thereto
The ring to Canace was borne also
With ceremony, where she sat at table
But certainly it is no lie or fable
The horse of brass could no way be removed
It stood as it were glued to ground Twas proved
There was no man could lead it out or drive
With any windlass that he might contrive
And why? *Because they hadn t craft to heave it*
And therefore in that place they had to leave it
Until the knight had taught them the manner
Of moving it as you ll hereafter hear
 Great was the press of people to and fro
Swarming to see this horse that stood there so;
For it so high was and so broad and long
So well proportioned as to be most strong
Just as it were a steed of Lombardy
Therewith as horselike and as quick of eye
As if a gentle Apulian courser twere
For truly from his tail unto his ear
Nature nor art could better nor amend
In any wise as people did contend
But evermore their greatest wonder was,
How it could go being made all of brass,
It was of *Faery as to people seemed*
And divers folk diversely of it deemed
So many heads so many wits one sees
They buzzed and murmured like a swarm of bees,
And played about it with their fantasy
Recalling what they d learned from poetry
Like Pegasus it was that mounted high
That horse which had great wings and so could fly,
Or else it was the horse of Greek Sinon
Who brought Troy to destruction years agone,
As men in these old histories may read
 My heart said one is evermore in *dread*,
I think some men at arms are hid therein
Who have in mind this capital to win
It were right well that of such things we know "
Another whispered to his fellow low
And said He lies for it is rather like
Some conjured up appearance of magic
Which jugglers practise at these banquets great "
Of sundry doubts like these they all did treat,
As vulgar people chatter commonly
Of all things that are made more cunningly
Than they can in their ignorance comprehend
They gladly judge they re made *for some base end*
 And some much wondered on the mirror s power,
That had been borne up to the donjon tower
And how men in it such strange things could see
Another answered saying it might be
Quite natural by angles oddly spaced
And sly reflections thus within it placed
And said at Rome was such a one men know
They spoke of *Alhazen and Vitello*
And Aristotle who wrote in their lives
On mirrors strange and on perspectives,
As all they know who ve read their published word
 And other folk did wonder on the sword
That had the power to pierce through anything

And born anon in to the heighe tour
With certeine officers ordeyned therfore,
And un to Canacee this ring was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table
But sikerly, with-outen any fable,
The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
It stant as it were to the ground y glewed
Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
For noon engyn of windas or polyve,
And cause why, for they can nat the craft.
And therefore in the place they han it laft
Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
To voyden him, as ye shal after here
 Greet was the prees, that swarmeth to and fro
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so,
For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
So wel proporcioned *for to ben strong,*
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardye,
Ther with so horsly, and so quik of yë
As it a gentil Poileys courser were
For certes, fro his tayl un to his ere,
Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende
In no degree, as al the peple wende
But evermore *hir moste wonder was,*
How that it coude goon, and was of bras,
It was of *Fairye, as the peple semed*
Diverse folk diversely they demed,
As many hedes, as many wittes ther been
They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
And maden skiles after hir fantasyes,
Rehersinge of thise olde poetryes,
And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
The hors that hadde winges *for to flee,*
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,
That broghte Troye to destruccion,
As men may in thise olde gestes rede
' Myn herte," quod oon, is evermore in *drede*,
I trowe som men of armes been ther inne,
That shapen hem this citee for to winne
It were right good that al swich thing were knowe."
Another rowned to his felawe lowe,
And seyde, he lyeth, it is rather lyk
An apparence y maad by som magyk,
As jogelours pleyen at thise festes grete "
Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of thinges that ben maad more subtilly
Than they can in her lewednes comprehende,
They demen gladly to the badder ende
 And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
That born was up in to the maister tour,
How men mighte in it swiche thinges see
Another answerde, and seyde it mighte wel be
Naturelly, by composiciouns
Of angles and of slye reflexiouns,
And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,
As knowen they that han hir bokes herd
 And othere folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde percen thurgh-out every thing,

And fille in speche of Thelophus the king,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
Right in swich wyse as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han your selven herd
They speken of sondry harding of metal,
And speke of medicynes ther with al,
And how, and whanne, it sholde y harded be,

der

As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,
And alle thing, til that the cause is wist.
Thus jangle they and demen and devyse,
Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse

As sorely wonder some on cause of thunder
Of ebb of flood of gossamer of mist

This noble king is set up in his trone
This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee
Heer is the revel and the jolitee
That is nat able a dul man to devyse
He moste han knowen love and his
servyse,
And been a festlich man as fresh as May,
That sholde yow devysen swich array
Who coude telle yow the forme of daunces,
So uncouthe and so fresshe contenaunces,
Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges
For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvinges?
No man but Launcelot and he is deed
Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed,
I seye na more, but in this jolynesse
I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse

He must have known and served love s high
emprise

end

Un to the temple, as reson was, they wende

Unto the temple as was right d d wend

A true man and a thief think not at one
And when he saw the thing so far was gone
That I had fully granted him my love
In such a way as I ve explained above
And given him my faithful heart as free
As he swore he had given his to me
Anon th s tiger full of doubleness
Fell on his knees devout in humbleness,
With so high reverence and by his face,
So like a lover in his gentle grace
So ravished as it seemed for very joy
That never Jason nor Paris of Troy—
Jason? Nay truly nor another man
Since Lamech lived who was the first began
To love two women (those that write have sworn),
Not ever since the primal man was born
Could any man by twenty thousandth part
Enact the tricks of this deceiver s art
Nor were he worthy to unlace his shoe
Where double dealing or deceit were due
Nor could so thank a person as he me!
His manner was most heavenly to see
For any woman were she ever so wise
So painted he and combed at point device
His manner all in all and every word
h by his bearing was I stirred
h heart
smart,

My will became his o t
That is to say my will obeyed his will
In everything in reason good or ill
Keeping within the bounds of honour ever
Never had I a thing so dear—ah never!—
As him God knows! not ever shall anew
This lasted longer than a year or two
While I supposed of him no thing but good
But finally thus at the last it stood
Fortune did decree that he must win
that I was in
ne,

Such grief I felt for hi ve
So on a day of me he took his leave
So sorrowfully, too, I thought truly
That he felt even as deep a woe as I
When I had heard him speak and saw his hue
Nevertheless, I thought he was so true
And that to me he would come back again
Within a little while let me explain
And twas quite reasonable that he must go
For honour s sake, for oft it happens so
That I made virtue of necessity
And took it well because it had to be
A look of cheer I felt not I put on
And took his hand I swear it by Saint John,
And said to him Behold I m yours in all,
Be you to me as I have been and shall

ght and a theef thenken nat oon"
o fer y-goon,

And yeven him my
As he swoor he his herte yaf to me,
Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,
Fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,
With so heigh reverence, and, as by his chere,
So lyk a gentil lovere of manere,
So ravisshed, as it semed, for the joye,
That never Jason, ne Parys of Troye,
Jason? certes, ne non other man,
Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as writen folk biforn,
Ne never, sin the firste man was born,
Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophimes of his art,
Ne were worthy unbokele his galoche,
Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde approche,
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me!
His maner was an heven for to see
Til any womman, were she never so wys,
So peynted he and kembde at point-devys
As wel his wordes as his contenaunce
And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That, if so were that any thing him smerte,
Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,
Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste
And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
That my wil was his willes instrument;
This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil
In alle thing, as fer as reson fil,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever
Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,
As him, god woot! ne never shal na mo
This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,
That I supposed of him noght but good
But fynally, thus atte laste it stood,
That fortune wolde that he moste twinne
Out of that place which that I was inne
Wher me was wo, that is no questioun,
I can nat make of it discripcioun,
For o thing dar I tellen boldely,
I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-by;
Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bileve
So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefully eek, that I wende verraily
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh his hewe
But nathelees, I thoughte he was so trewe,
And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
With inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn,
And reson wolde eek that he moste go
For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
That I made vertu of necessitee,
And took it wel, sin that it moste be
As I best mighte, I hidde fro him
And took him by the
And seyde him thus
Beth swich as I

Of which right now ye han your-selven herd.
They speken of sondry harding of metal,
And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,
And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded be;
Which is unknowe algates unto me.

As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,
And alle thing, til that the cause is wist.
Thus jangle they and demen and devyse,
Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.
Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beest royal,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran,
Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambinskan,
Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye.
Toforn him gooth the loude minstralcye,
Til he cam to his chambre of parements,
Ther as they sownen diverse instruments,
That it is lyk an heven for to here.
Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,
For in the Fish hir lady sat ful hye,
And loketh on hem with a freendly yë.
This noble king is set up in his trone.
This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
Heer is the revel and the jolitee
That is nat able a dul man to devyse.
He moste han knowen love and his servyse,
And been a festlich man as fresh as May,
That sholde yow devysen swich array.

hem, til men to the soper dresse

Un-to the temple, as reson was, they wende.

And so they spoke of Telephus the king.

Thus spoke the people and then drew apart,

der,
As sorely wonder some on cause of thunder,
Of ebb, of flood, of gossamer, of mist,

Till it was like a heavenly thing to hear.

As no dull man is able to surmise,
He must have known and served love's high emprise,

end,
Unto the temple, as was right, did

The service done, they supped while yet 'twas day.
What needs it that I tell all their array?
Each man knows well that at a kingly feast
There's plenty for the greatest and the least,

Such wondering was there on this horse of brass
That, since the siege of Troy did overpass,
When once a horse seemed marvellous to men

And prayed him tell the means of governance
This horse anon began to trip and dance
When this strange knight laid hand upon the rein
And said "Sire, there's no more I need explain
Than, when you wish to journey anywhere,
You must but twirl a peg within his ear,
Which I will show you when alone with you.
You must direct him to what place also,
Or to what country you may please to ride
And when you come to where you would abide,
Bid him descend, and twirl another pin,

Ride when you choose, there's no more to be done."

The service doon, they soupen al by day
What nedeth yow rehercen hir array?
Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste
Hath plentee, to the moste and to the leeste,
And deyntees mo than been in my knowing
At-after soper gooth this noble king
To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.
Swich wondring was ther on this hors of bras
That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,
Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,
Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho.

reyne,
And seyde, "sir, ther is na-more to seyne,

[illegible]NDETH THE FIRST PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE SECOND PART

The nurse of good digestion, natural sleep,
Caused them to nod, and bade them they take keep

be.

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,
Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe,
That muchel drink and labour wolde han reste,

They thanken him galpinge, by two, by three,
And every wight gan drawe him to his reste,
As slepe hem bad, they toke it for the beste.
Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me;
Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,
That causeth dreem, of which ther nis no charge.
They slepen til that it was pryme large,
The moste part, but it were Canacee,
She was ful mesurable, as wommen be.
For of hir fader hadde she take leve
To gon to reste, sone after it was eve,
Hir liste nat appalled for to be,
Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see,
And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne awook.
For swich a joye she in hir herte took
Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,
That twenty tyme she changed hir
colour,
[illegible]
And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse
Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse,
As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anoon,
And seyde, "madame, whider wil ye goon
Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste"
"I wol," quod she, "aryse, for me leste
No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute"
Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret route,
And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve,
Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,
As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,
That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne,
Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was,
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
Lightly, for to pleye and walke on fote,
Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee,
[illegible]
[illegible] of the seson and the morweninge,
And for the foules that she herde singe
For right anon she wiste what they
mente
[illegible]
As Canacee was pleying in hir walk,
Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,
That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
That all the wode resouned of hir cry

They thanked him, gaping all, by two, by three,
And every one began to go to rest,
As sleep them bade, they took it for the best
But here their dreams shall not by me be said,
The fumes of wine had filled each person's head,
Which cause senseless dreams at any time
They slept next morning till the hour of prime,
That is, the others, but not Canace,
She was right temperate, as women be
For of her father had she taken leave,
To go to rest, soon after it was eve,
For neither pale nor languid would she be,
Nor wear a weary look for men to see,
But slept her first deep sleep and then awoke
For so much joy upon her heart there broke
When she looked on the mirror and the ring
That twenty times she flushed, and sleep did
bring—
[illegible]
And said to her that she was pleased to rise
Old women like this governess are wise,
[illegible]
And they rose up, a dozen more or less,
[illegible]
meant
Just by their songs, and learned all their intent.
The point of every story, why it's told,
If it's delayed till interest grow cold
In those who have, perchance, heard it before,
The savour passes from it more and more,
[illegible]
Till all the wood resounded mournfully.

For she had beaten herself so pitiably
With both her wings that the red glistening blood
Ran down the tree trunk whereupon she stood
And ever in one same way she cried and shrieked
And with her beak her body she so pricked
That there's no tiger nor a cruel beast
That dwells in open wood or deep forest
Would not have wept if ever weep he could
For pity of her she shrieked alway so loud
For never yet has been a man alive—
If but description I could well contrive—

  This king's fair daughter Princess Canace

And of her pity well nigh was she dead
So to the tree she went right hastily
And on this falcon looked she pitifully
And held her lap up wide for she knew now
The falcon must come falling from the bough
When next it swooned away from loss of blood
A long while waiting there the princess stood
Till at the last she spoke in her voice clear
Unto the hawk as you'll hereafter hear
  What is the cause if it be one to tell
That you are in this furious pain of hell?
Said Canace unto this hawk above
Is this for sorrow of death or loss of love?
For as I think these are the causes two
That torture gentle heart with greatest woe
Of other ills there is no need to speak
Because such harm upon yourself you wreak
Which proves right well that either love or dread
Must be the reason for your cruel deed
Since I can see no one that gives you chase
For love of God come do yourself some grace
Or say what thing may help for west nor east
Have I before now seen a bird or beast
That ever treated self so wretchedly
You slay me with your sorrow verily
Such great compassion in my heart has grown
For God's dear love come from the dry tree down
And as I am a monarch's daughter true
If I but verily the real cause knew

Y beten hath she hir-self so pitously
With bothe hir winges, til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree ther as she stood
And ever in oon she cryde alwey and shrighte,
And with hir beek hir selven so she prighte,
That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel beste,
That dwelleth either in wode or in foreste
That no'de han wept, if that he wepe coude,
For sorwe of hir, she shrighte alwey so loude
For ther nas never yet no man on lyve—
If that I coude a faucon wel discryve—
That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
Of shap, and al that mighte y rekened be
A faucon peregryn than semed she
Of fremde land and evermore, as she stood,
She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,
Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree
  This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,
That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,
Thurgh which she understood wel every thing
That any foul may in his ledene seyn,
And coude answere him in his ledene ageyn
Hath understonde what this faucon seyde,

When that it swowned next, for lakke of blood
A longe while to wayten hir she stood
Till atte laste she spak in this manere
Un to the hauk, as ye shul after here
  'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,
That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?'
Quod Canacee un to this hauk above
'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of love?
For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two
That causen moost a gentil herte wo,
Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke
For ye your self upon your self yow wreke,
Which proveth wel, that either love or drede
Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,
Sin that I see non other wight yow chace
For love of god, as dooth your selven grace
Or what may ben your help, for west nor eest
Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest
That ferde with him self so pitously
Ye slee me with your sorwe, verraily,

  Tho shrighte this faucon more pitously
Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde anoon,
And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a stoon,
Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take

Is preved al-day, as men may it see,
As wel by werk as by auctoritee,
For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse
I see wel that ye han of my distresse
Compassioun, my faire Canacee,
Of verray wommanly benignitee
That nature in your principles hath set
But for non hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obeye un to your herte free,
And for to maken other be war by me

And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,
That other weep, as she to water wolde
Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille

So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures
Right as a serpent hit him under floures
Til he may seen his tyme for to byte

And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,

Is proved and day by day as men may see
As vell by deeds as by authority
For gentle heart can spy out gentleness
I see well that you have on my distress
Comp ss on my fair Pr ncess Canace
Of truly womanly ben gnity
That nature in your character has set
Not that I hope much good therefrom to get
But to obey the word of your heart free
And so that others may be warned by me
As by the whelp instructed is the lion
Just for that cause and reason shall I fly on
While yet I have the leisure and the space,
The story of my wrongs to you I ll trace
And ever while the one her sorrow sa d
The other wept as she to water d fled
Unt l the falcon bade her to be still

A true man and a thief think not at one

As he swore he had given his to me,
Anon this tiger full of doubleness
Fell on his knees devout in humbleness
With so high reverence and by his face,
So like a lover in his gentle grace
So ravished as it seemed for very joy,
That never Jason nor Paris of Troy—
Jason? Nay truly nor another man
Since Lamech lived who was the first began
To love two women (those that write have sworn),
Not ever since the primal man was born
Could any man by twenty thousandth part
Enact the tricks of this deceiver's art
Nor were he worthy to unlace his shoe
Where double dealing or deceit were due
Nor could so thank a person as he me!
His manner was most heavenly to see
For any woman were she ever so wise
So painted he and combed at point device,
His manner all in all and every word

Never had I a thing so dear—ah never!—
As him God knows! nor ever shall anew

Out of that place that home, that I was in
Whether I felt woe there's no question none,

So on a day of me he took his leave
So sorrowfully too I thought truly
That he felt even as deep a woe as I
When I had heard him speak and saw his hue

For honour's sake for oft it happens so

'A trew wight and a theef thenken nat oon'
And, whan he saugh the thing so fer y-goon,
That I had graunted him fully my love,
In swich a gyse as I have seyd above,
And yeven him my trewe herte, as free
As he swoor he his herte yaf to me,
Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,
Fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,
With so heigh reverence, and, as by his chere,
So lyk a gentil lovere of manere,
So ravisshed, as it semed, for the joye,
That never Jason, ne Parys of Troye,
Jason? certes, ne non other man,
Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as writen folk biforn,
Ne never, sin the firste man was born,
Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophimes of his art,
Ne were worthy unbokele his galoche,
Ther doublenesse or feyning sholde approche,
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me!
His maner was an heven for to see
Til any womman, were she never so wys,
So peynted he and kembde at point devys
As wel his wordes as his contenaunce
And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That, if so were that any thing him smerte,
Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,
Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste
And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
That my wil was his willes instrument,
This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil
In alle thing, as fer as reson fil,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever
Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,

Out of that place which that I was inne
Wher me was wo, that is no questioun,
I can nat make of it discripcioun,
For o thing dar I tellen boldely,
I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther by,
Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bileve
So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefully eek, that I wende verraily
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh his hewe

That I made vertu of necessitee,
And took it wel, sin that it moste be
As I best mighte, I hidde fro him my sorwe,
And took him by the hond, seint John to borwe,
And seyde him thus 'lo, I am youres al,
Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal'

What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce,
Who can sey bet than he, who can do werse?
Whan he hath al wel seyd, thanne hath he doon
'Therfor bihoveth him a ful long spoon
That shal ete with a feend,' thus herde I seye
So atte laste he moste forth his weye,
And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him leste
Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,
I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,

For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,

And with that word this faucon gan to crye,
And swowned eft in Canaceës barme
Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes harme,
That Canacee and alle hir wommen made,

And covered it with veluëttes blewe,

Right for despyt were peynted hem bisyde,
And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde

What he replied it needs not I rehearse
Who can say better than he who can do worse?
When he had well said all his good was done
It well behooves him take a lengthy spoon
Who eats with devils so I ve heard folk say

For though you night and day take of them heed,
And fairly strew their cage as soft as silk
And give them sugar honey bread and milk,
Yet on the instant when the door is up
They with their feet will spurn their feeding cup
And to the wood will fly and worms will eat
So are they all newfangled of their meat
And love all novelties of their own kind
Nor nobleness of blood may ever bind
So fared this tercelet oh alas the day!
Though he was gently born and fresh and gay
And handsome and well mannered aye and free,

But henceforth I a straightened course will hold
Great battles and adventures to relate
Whereof were never heard such marvels great

First will I tell you of King Cambinskan

And after that I'll speak of Cambalo,
Who in the lists fought with the brothers two
For Canace, before he could her win
And where I left off, I'll again begin

First wol I telle yow of Cambinskan,
That in his tyme many a citee wan,
And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,
How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,
For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was,
Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of bras,
And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
That faught in listes with the bretheren two
For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne
And ther I lefte I wol ageyn biginne

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND PART

HERE BEGINNETH THE THIRD PART

Apollo in his chariot whirled so high
That in the God Mercurius house, the sly—

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye, [11,019a]
Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye—[b]

(*Unfinished*)

HERE FOLLOWETH THE WORDS OF THE FRANKLIN TO THE SQUIRE, AND THE WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE FRANKLIN

In faith sir squire, you have done well with it,
And openly I praise you for your wit,
The franklin said, 'Considering your youth,
So feelingly you speak, sir, in good truth!
In my opinion, there is none that's here
In eloquence shall ever be your peer,
If you but live, may God give you good chance
And in all virtue send continuance!
For, sir, your speech was great delight to me
I have a son, and by the Trinity
I'd rather have, than twenty pounds in land,
Though it were right now fallen to my hand,
He were a man of such discretion shown
As you, sir, fie on what a man may own,
Unless the man have virtue therewithal
I've checked my son, and yet again I shall,
For he toward virtue chooses not to wend,

"In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel y-quit,
And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,"
Quod the Frankeleyn, "considering thy youthe,
So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow the!
As to my doom, there is non that is here
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
If that thou live, god yeve thee good chaunce,
And in vertu sende thee continuaunce!

But-if a man be vertuous with-al.
I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
For he to vertu listeth nat entende,
But for to pleye at dees, and to despende,

"What, franklin? God, sir, well you know, I trust,
That each of you must tell us, at the least,

"What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel thou wost
That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste
A tale or two, or breken his biheste"
"That knowe I wel, sir," quod the frankeleyn,
"I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn
Though to this man I speke a word or two"
"Telle on thy tale with-outen wordes mo"
"Gladly, sir host," quod he, "I wol obeye

Your will, good host, now hearken what I say
For I'll not be contrary in any wise,
At least so far as my wit shall suffice,
I pray to God that it may please you, rough
Though it may be, I'll know 'tis good enough"

Un-to your wil, now herkneth what I seye
I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;
I prey to god that it may plesen yow,
Than woot I wel that it is good y-now"

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

Thise olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes,
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge,
Which layes with hir instruments they songe,
Or elles redden hem for hir plesaunce,
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I can.
  But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,
At my biginning first I yow biseche
Have me excused of my rude speche,
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn,
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero
Colours ne knowe I none, with-outen drede,
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;
My spirit feleth noght of swich matere
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here.

[illegible]
Which I shall gladly tell you, as I can
  But, sirs, because I am an ignorant man,
At my beginning must I first beseech
You will excuse me for my vulgar speech,
I never studied rhetoric, that's certain,
That which I say, it must be bare and plain
I never slept on Mount Parnassus, no,
Nor studied Marcus Tullius Cicero
Colours I know not, there's no doubt indeed,
Save colours such as grow within the mead,
Or such as men achieve with dye or paint
Colours of rhetoric I find but quaint,
My spirit doesn't feel the beauty there
But if you wish, my story you shall hear"

THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

In Armorik, that called is Britayne,
Ther was a knight that loved and dide his payne
To serve a lady in his beste wyse,
And many a labour, many a greet empryse
He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne
For she was oon, the faireste under sonne,
And eek therto come of so heigh kinrede,
That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for drede,
Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his distresse
But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse,
And namely for his meke obeysaunce,
Hath swich a pitee caught of his penunce,
[illegible]
[illegible] wolde he have for shame of his degree
  She thanked him, and with ful greet humblesse
She seyde, "sire, sith of your gentillesse
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne,
Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,

In old Armorica, now Brittany,
There was a knight that loved and strove, did he
To serve a lady in the highest wise,
And many a labour, many a great emprise
He wrought for her, or ever she was won
For she was of the fairest under sun,
And therewithal come of so high kindred
That scarcely could this noble knight, for dread,
Tell her his woe, his pain, and his distress.
But at the last she, for his worthiness,
And specially for his meek obedience,
[illegible]
Of his free will he swore to her, as knight,
That never in his life, by day or night,
Would he assume a right of mastery
Against her will, nor show her jealousy,
But would obey and do her will in all
As any lover of his lady shall,
[illegible]
Would God there never come between us twain,

For any guilt of mine, a war or strife
Sir, I will be your humble, faithful wife
Take this as truth till heart break in my breast"

[illegible]

Beats his fair wings, and farewell! He is gone!

[illegible]

Learn to endure, or else, so may I go
You'll have to learn it, whether you will or no
For in this world, it's certain, no one is
Who never does or says sometimes amiss
Sickness, or woe, or what the stars have sent,
Anger, or wine, or change of temperament
Causes one oft to do amiss or speak
For every wrong one may not vengeance wreak,
Conditions must determine temperance
In all who understand good governance
And therefore did this wise and worthy knight,

[illegible]

So was he both in lordship and bondage,
In bondage? Nay but in lordship above,
Since he had both his lady and his love,
His lady truly, and his wife also
To which the law of love accords we know
And when he was in this prosperity,
Home with his wife he went to his country,
Not far from Penmarch, where his dwelling was
And there he lived in bliss and all solace
Who could relate, save those that wedded be,
The joy the ease, and the prosperity
That are between a husband and a wife?
A year and more endured this blissful life,

[illegible]

As in my gilt, were outher werre or stryf
Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf,
Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte breste"
Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste
For o thing, sires, saufly dar I seye,
That frendes everich other moot obeye,
If they wol longe holden companye
Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrye;
Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon
Beteth hise winges, and farewel! he is gon!
Love is a thing as any spirit free,
Wommen of kinde desiren libertee,
And nat to ben constreyned as a thral,
And so don men, if I soth seyen shal
Loke who that is most pacient in love,
He is at his avantage al above
Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn,
For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,
Thinges that rigour sholde never atteyne.
For every word men may nat chyde or pleyne.
Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon,
Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or noon
For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,
That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme amis.
Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,
Wyn, wo, or chaunginge of complexioun
Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken
On every wrong a man may nat be wreken,
After the tyme, moste be temperaunce
To every wight that can on governaunce
And therfore hath this wyse worthy knight,
To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight,
And she to him ful wisly gan to swere
That never sholde ther be defaute in here.
Heer may men seen an humble wys accord,
Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,
Servant in love, and lord in mariage,
Than was he bothe in lordship and servage,
Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love,
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love acordeth to
And whan he was in this prosperitee,
Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree,
Nat fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,
Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas
Who coude telle, but he had wedded be,
The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?
A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,
Til that the knight of which I speke of thus,
That of Kayrrud[1] was cleped Arveragus,
Shoop him to goon, and dwelle a yeer or tweyne
In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne,
To seke in armes worship and honour;
For al his lust he sette in swich labour,
And dwelled ther two yeer, the book seith thus.
Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,
And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lyf.
For his absence wepeth she and syketh,

[1]Probably modern Karru

As doon thise noble wyves whan hem lyketh
She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth,
  pleyneth,
Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth,
That al this wyde world she sette at noght
Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hevy thoght,
Conforten hir in al that ever they may,
They prechen hir, they telle hir night and day,
That causelees she sleeth hir self, allas!
And every confort possible in this cas
They doon to hir with al hir bisinesse,
Al for to make hir leve hir hevinesse
  By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,
Men may so longe graven in a stoon,
Til som figure ther inne emprented be
So longe han they conforted hir, til she
Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,
Th emprenting of hir consolacioun,
Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage,
She may nat alwey duren in swich rage
  And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his welfare,

And often with hir freendes walketh she
Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,
Wher as she many a ship and barge seigh
Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go,
But than was that a parcel of hir wo
For to hir self ful ofte 'allas!' seith she,
'Is ther no ship, of so manye as I see,
Wol bringen hom my lord? than were myn herte
Al warisshed of his bittre peynes smerte'
  Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thinke,
And caste hir eyen dounward fro the brinke
But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake,
That on hir feet she mighte hir noght sustene
Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
And pitously in to the see biholde,

For by this werk, south, north ne west, ne eest,
Ther nis y fostred man, ne brid, ne beest

As noble wifes do at a lone fireside
She mourned watched wailed she fasted and com
  plained

That for no cause she killed herself alas!
And every comfort possible in this pass
They gave to her, in all their busyness
To make her thus put by her heaviness
  With passing time as you know every one
Men may so long with tools engrave a stone
That thereon will some figure printed be
And so long did they comfort her that she
Received at last by hope and reason grown
Imprinted consolations as her own
Whereby her sorrow did somewhat assuage,
She could not always live in such a rage
  And then Arviragus through all her care,

To come and wander in their company
And drive away her gloomy fantasy
And finally she granted that request
For well she saw that it was for the best
  Now stood her castle very near the sea
And often with her good friends wandered she
For pleasure on the cliffs that reared so high
Whence she saw many a ship and barge go by
Sailing their courses where they wished to go
But that was part and parcel of her woe
For to herself full oft Alas! said she

That seem but rather foul confusion thrown
Awry than any fair world of Thine own

And man's a creature made by Thee most fair,
After Thine image as Thou didst declare
Then seemed it that Thou had st great charity
Toward mankind but how then may it be
That Thou hast wrought such means man to destroy
Which means do never good but ever annoy?
I know well clerics gladly do attest
By arguments that all is for the best
Though I can never the real causes know
But O Thou God Who made st the wind to blow,
Keep Thou my lord! This is my argument
To clerks I leave disputing on what s meant
But O would God that all these rocks so black
Were sunken down to Hell for my lord s sake!
These rocks they slay my very heart with fear
Thus would she say with many a piteous tear
Her friends saw that to her it was no sport
To wander by the sea but discomfort
And so arranged to revel somewhere else
They led her along rivers and to wells
And such delightful places and told fables
And danced and played at chess and played at tables [1]
So on a day all in the morningtide
Unto a garden which was there beside
Wherein they d given command that there should be
Food and whatever else was necessary
They went for pleasure all the livelong day
And this was on the morning sixth of May
And May had painted with his soft warm showers
This garden full of foliage and of flowers
And work of man s hand had so curiously
Arrayed this lovely garden truthfully
That never was another of such price
Unless it were the very Paradise
The scent of flowers and the fair fresh sight
Would have made any heart dance for delight
That e er was born unless too great sickness
Or too great sorrow held it in distress
So full it was of beauty and pleasance
After their dinner all began to dance
And sing also save Dorigen alone
Who made alway her same complaint and moan
For him she saw not through the dancing go,
Who was her husband and her love also
Nevertheless she must a time abide
And with good hope held let her sorrow slide
Amid these mazes with the other men
There danced a squire before this Dorigen
That was more blithe and prettier of array
In my opinion than the month of May
He sang and danced better than any man
That is or was since first the world began
Therewith he was description to contrive
One of best conditioned men alive
Young strong right virtuous, and rich and wise
And well beloved and one to idealize
And briefly, if I tell the truth withal
Unknown to Dorigen—nay least of all—
This pleasant squire servant to Queen Venus

Which mankinde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk
Than semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankinde, but how than may it be
That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen,
Whiche menes do no good, but ever anoyen?
I woot wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste,
By arguments, that al is for the beste,
Though I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.
But thilke god, that made wind to blowe,
As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun,
To clerkes lete I al disputisoun
But wolde god that alle thise rokkes blake
Were sonken in to helle for his sake!
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the fere "
Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous tere
Hir freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but disconfort,
And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles
They leden hir by riveres and by welles,
And eek in othere places delitables,
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables [1]
So on a day, right in the morwe tyde,
Un to a gardin that was ther bisyde,
In which that they had maad hir ordinaunce
Of vitaille and of other purveyaunce,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peynted with his softe shoures
This gardin ful of leves and of floures,
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swich prys,
But if it were the verray paradys
Th odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte
That ever was born, but-if to gret siknesse,
Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse,
So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce
At after diner gonne they to daunce,
And singe also, save Dorigen allone,
Which made alwey hir compleint and hir mone,
For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,
That was hir housbonde and hir love also
But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde,
And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde
Up-on this daunce, amonges othere men,
Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,
That fressher was and jolyer of array,
As to my doom, than is the monthe of May
He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man
That is, or was, sith that the world bigan
Ther-with he was, if men sholde him discryve,
Oon of the beste faringe man on lyve,
Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,
And wel biloved and holden in gret prys
And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
Unwiting of this Dorigen at al,
This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,

[1] Backgammon.

Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,
Had loved hir best of any creature
Two yeer and more, as was his aventure,
But never dorste he telle hir his grevaunce,

Of swich matere made he manye layes,
Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,
How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
But languissheth, as a furie dooth in helle,
And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo
In other manere than ye here me seye,
Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye,
Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at
daunces,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir
observaunces,
It may wel be he loked on hir face

And was a man of worship and honour,
And hadde y-knowen him of tyme yore,
They fille in speche, and forth more and more
Un to his purpos drough Aurelius,
And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde thus
"Madame," quod he, "by god that this world
made,

I ne have as now no leyser more to seye,

But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,
By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne shal I never been untrewe wyf

Sin I yow see so pitously complayne,
Loke what day that, endelong Britayne,
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon—
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,

The name of whom was this, Aurelius,

Of such a subject made he many lays,

In other manner than you hear me say
Dared he not unto her his woe betray,
Save that, perchance, there would be times at
dances,
Where young folk honoured all that makes
romances,
It may well be he looked upon her face
In such wise as a man who sued for grace;

made,

My guerdon is the breaking of my heart,
Madam, have pity on my pains that smart,

But since, Aurelius I know your intent,
By that same God Who gave me soul and life,
Never shall I become an untrue wife
In word or deed, so far as I have wit
I will remain his own to whom I m knit;
Take this for final answer as from me "
But after that she said thus sportively.
"Aurelius," said she, ' by God above,

I say, when you have made the coast so clean
Of rocks that there is no stone to be seen,

Let suchlike follies out of your heart slide.
What pleasure can a man have in his life
Who would go love another man's own wife,
That has her body when he wishes it?"
Deep sighs Aurelius did then emit,

Then came her other friends, and many a one,
And in the alleys wandered up and down,
And nothing knew of this decision shown,

Except the wretch Aurelius, alas!
He to his house went with a woeful heart,

And on his bare knees did he kneel him down
And in his raving said his orison
For very woe out of his wits he fled

He said Apollo governor and god
Of every plant, herb, tree, and flower in sod,

Lo, Lord! My lady has my swift death sworn,
Without my guilt, save thy benignity
Upon my dying heart have some pity!
For well I know, Lord Phoebus, if you lest,
You can thus aid me, save my lady, best
Now vouchsafe that I may for you devise
A plan to help me, telling in what wise

That at the time of your next opposition,
Which will be in the Lion, make petition

Than wol I love yow best of any man,
Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I can"
"Is ther non other grace in yow?" quod he
"No, by that lord," quod she, "that maked me!
For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.
Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.
What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf
For to go love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan so that him lyketh?"
Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh;
Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde
"Madame," quod he, "this were an inpossible!
Than moot I dye of sodein deth horrible"
And with that word he turned him anoon.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and doun,
And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeinly bigonne revel newe
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe,
For th'orisonte hath reft the sonne his light;
This is as muche to seye as it was night.
And hoom they goon in joye and in solas,
Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas!
He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte;
He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte
Him semed that he felte his herte colde,
Up to the hevene his handes he gan holde,
And on his knowes bare he sette him doun,
And in his raving seyde his orisoun
For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.
He niste what he spak, but thus he seyde;
With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne
Un-to the goddes, and first un-to the sonne.
He seyde, "Appollo, god and governour
Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,
That yevest, after thy declinacioun,
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or hye,
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable yë
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.
Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn
With-oute gilt, but thy benignitee
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,
Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.
Now voucheth sauf that I may yow devyse
How that I may been holpe and in what wyse.
Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and quene,
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet emperesse aboven him is she
Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desyr
Is to be quiked and lightned of your fyr,
For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
Right so the see desyreth naturelly
To folwen hir, as she that is goddesse
Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.
Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste—
Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste—
That now, next at this opposicioun,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,

As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge
The hyeste rokke in Armorik Briteyne,
And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne,
Than certes to my lady may I seye
Holdeth your heste, the rokkes been aweye'
Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me,
Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye,
I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two
Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
And spring flood laste bothe night and day
And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche manere
To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,
Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun
In to hir owene derke regioun
Under the ground ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
Or never-mo shal I my lady winne
Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke,
Lord Phebus see the teres on my cheke,
And of my peyne have som compassioun"
And with that word in swowne he fil adoun,

Lete I this woful creature lye,
Chese he, for me, whether he wol live or dye
Arveragus with hele and greet honour,
As he that was of chivalrye the flour,

He noght entendeth to no swich matere,
But daunceth, justeth, maketh hir good chere,
And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle
In langour and in torment furious
Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,

But in his herte ay was the arwe kene
And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure[1]
In surgerye is perilous the cure,
But men mighte touche the arwe
His brother weep and wayled pr
Til atte laste him fil in remembr
That whyl he was at Orliens in F
As yonge clerkes, that been liker

And let this flood endure two years for me,
Then truly to my lady may I say
Now keep your word the rocks are gone away'
Lord Phoebus do this miracle for me
Pray her she run no faster course being free—

And save she vouchsafe Lord in such manner
To grant to me my sovereign lady dear

And on my pain be some compassion shown'
And with that word in swoon he tumbled down

Arviragus with health and honour's flour,
As he that was of chivalry the flower
Came home again with other gentlemen
O happy are you now my Dorigen
Who have your pleasant husband in your arms

Some words of love of her he had no doubt

In weakness and in torment furious
Two years and more lay wretched Aurelius
Ere foot on earth he went—aye even one
For comfort in this long time had he none
Save from his brother who was a good clerk
He knew of all this woe and all this work.
For to no other human tis certain
Dared he his cause of illness to explain
In breast he kept more secret his idea

To read of arts that are most curious,
And into every nook and cranny turn
Particular strange sciences to learn—
He thus recalled that once upon a day,
At Orléans, while studying there, I say,
A book of natural magic there he saw
In a friend's room, a bachelor of law
(Though he was there to learn another craft),
Which book he'd privately on his desk left,
And which book said much of the operations
[illegible]

And when this book came to his remembrance,
At once, for joy, his heart began to dance,
And to himself he said in privacy
"My brother shall be healed, and speedily;
For I am sure that there are sciences
Whereby men make divers appearances,
[illegible]
Sometimes there seemed to come a grim lion,
[illegible]

Thus seemed these things to be in each man's sight.
"Now, then, conclude I thus, that if I might
At Orléans some old school fellow find,
Who has these mansions of the moon in mind,
Or other natural magic from above,
He could well make my brother have his love
For with a mere appearance clerks may make
It seem in man's sight that all rocks that break
The seas of Brittany were banished, so
That right above them ships might come and go,
And in such wise endure a week or two,
Then were my brother cured of all his woe
[illegible]

And forward on his way at once did fare
In hope to be relieved of all his care
[illegible]

snows,

To reden artes that been curious,
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne,
He him remembred that, upon a day,
At Orliens in studie a book he say
Of magik naturel, which his felawe,
That was that tyme a bacheler of lawe,
Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
Had prively upon his desk y-laft,
Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns,
Touchinge the eighte and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone, and swich folye,
As in our dayes is nat worth a flye,
For holy chirches feith in our bileve
Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembraunce,
Anon for joye his herte gan to daunce,
And to him-self he seyde prively.
"My brother shal be warisshed hastily;
For I am siker that ther be sciences,
By whiche men make diverse apparences
Swiche as thise subtile tregetoures pleye.
For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,
That tregetours, with-inne an halle large,
Have maad come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun
Somtyme hath semed come a grim leoun,
And somtyme floures springe as in a mede;
Somtyme a vyne, and grapes whyte and rede;
Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon,
And whan hem lyked, voyded it anoon.
Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.
Now than conclude I thus, that if I mighte
At Orliens som old felawe y-finde,
That hadde this mones mansions in minde,
Or other magik naturel above,
He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
For with an apparence a clerk may make
To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes blake
Of Britaigne weren y-voyded everichon,
[illegible]
Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste."
What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?
Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,
And swich confort he yaf him for to gon
To Orliens, that he up stirte anon,
And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare,
In hope for to ben lissed of his care.
Whan they were come almost to that citee,
[illegible]
"I knowe," quod he, "the cause of your coming",
[illegible]

dawes,

And he answerde him that they dede were,
For which he weep ful ofte many a tere
Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,
And forth with this magicien is he gon
Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese
Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem plese,
So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon

And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes
He saugh, whan voided were thise wilde deer,
Thise fauconers upon a fair river,
That with hir haukes han the heron slayn
Tho saugh he knightes justing in a playn,
And after this, he dide him swich plesaunce,
That he him shewed his lady on a daunce
On which him self he daunced, as him thoughte
And whan this maister, that this magik wroughte,
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,
And farewel' al our revel was ago
And yet remoeved they never out of the hous,

And seyde him thus 'is redy our soper?
Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,

At after soper fille they in tretee,
What somme sholde this maistres guerdon be,
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne
He made it straunge, and swoor, so god him save,
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon
Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,

To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him leste,
And wel ny al that night he hadde his reste,

Some falconers by river flowing clear
Who with their hawks had many herons slain
And then he saw knights jousting on a plain
And after this he did him such pleasance
That he showed him his lady in a dance

And asked him thus is supper ready sir
Almost an hour it is I'll undertake

It is all ready though you will right now

save

This great wide world the which men say is round
I'd give it all, if I were lord of it

To bed went this Aurelius and undressed

Aurelius, with this wizard at his side,
And thus they came to where they would abide;

bright,

And "Noel" cried then every lusty man
Aurelius, in all that he could plan,

This subtle clerk such ruth had for this man,
That night and day he sped about his plan,

So at the last the proper time he found
To do his tricks and all his wretchedness

Nor his known roots, nor any other gears,
As, say, his centres and his argument,
And his proportionals convenient
In estimating truly his equations
The eighth sphere showed him in his calculations
How far removed was Alnath, passing by,
From head of that fixed Aries on high
That in the ninth great sphere considered is,

And in what face and term and all could tell,
This gave him then the mansion of the moon—
He worked it out accordingly right soon,
And did the other necessary rites
To cause illusions and such evil sights
As heathen peoples practised in those days
Therefore no longer suffered he delays,
But all the rocks by magic and his lore
Appeared to vanish for a week or more
Aurelius, who yet was torn by this,
Whether he'd gain his love or fare amiss,
Awaited night and day this miracle,
And when he knew there was no obstacle,
That vanished were these black rocks, every one,

Phebus wex old, and hewed lyk latoun,
That in his hote declinacioun
Shoon as the burned gold with stremes brighte,
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.
The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn
Biforn him stant braun of the tusked swyn,
And "Nowel" cryeth every lusty man.
Aurelius, in al that ever he can,
Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
And preyeth him to doon his diligence
To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte
This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,
That night and day he spedde him that he can,
To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun,
This is to seye, to make illusioun,
By swich an apparence or jogelrye,
I ne can no termes of astrologye,
That she and every wight sholde wene and seye,
That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
Or elles they were sonken under grounde
So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde
To maken his japes and his wrecchednesse
Of swich a superstícious cursednesse.
His tables Toletanes forth he broght,
Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noght,
Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,
Ne his rotes ne his othere geres,
As been his centres and his arguments,
And his proporcionels convenients
For his equacions in every thing
And, by his eighte spere in his wirking,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above
That in the ninthe speere considered is,
Ful subtilly he calculed al this
Whan he had founde his firste mansioun,
He knew the remenant by proporcioun,
And knew the arysing of his mone weel,
And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel,
And knew ful weel the mones mansioun
Acordaunt to his operacioun,
And knew also his othere observaunces
For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces
As hethen folk used in thilke dayes,
For which no lenger maked he delayes,
But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye,
It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye
Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
Wher he shal han his love or fare amis,
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle,
And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,
That voided were thise rokkes everichon,

Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon
And seyde, I woful wrecche, Aurelius,
Thanke yow lord, and lady myn Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares colde
And to the temple his wey forth hath he holde,
Wher as he knew he sholde his lady see
And whan he saugh his tyme anon right he,
With dredful herte and with ful humble chere,
Salewed hath his sovereyn lady dere
My righte lady, quod this woful man,
Whom I most drede and love as I best can,
And lothest were of al this world displese,
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese,
That I moste dyen heer at your foot anon,
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon,
But certes outher moste I dye or pleyne,
Ye slee me giltelees for verray peyne
But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no routhe,
Avyseth yow er that ye breke your trouthe
Repenteth yow for thilke god above,
Er ye me sleen by cause that I yow love
For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight,
Nat that I chalange any thing of right

In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye —

And swowneth, that it routhe was to see,

Save only deeth or elles dishonour

Do vn at the master s feet he fell anon

And when he saw his opportun ty

Were it not that for you I ve such unease
That I must d e here at your feet anon
I would not tell how I am woebegone
But I must either die or else complain
You slay me for no crime with utter pain
But on my death although you have no ruth
Take heed now ere you break your promised troth

In you my sovere gn lady save your grace

For thought I never by poss b l ty
That such prod g ous marvel e er might bel

My 1 1e tnan ot my body come to shame
Or know myself untrue or lose my name,
By death I know it well I may be freed

Has there not many a noble wife, indeed,
And many a maiden slain herself—alas!—
Rather than with her body do trespass?
"Yes, truly, lo, these stories bear witness;
When Thirty Tyrants, full of wickedness,

Upon the pavement—God give them mischance!

Who was not slain, and who with good intent
Preferred not death rather than give consent
To be thus ravished of her maidenhead
Why should I then hold dying in such dread?
Lo, too, the tyrant Aristoclides,
Who loved a maiden called Stimphalides.
Whenas her father had been slain by night,
Unto Diana's temple she took flight

She took her children all and leaped right down
Into the fire, choosing thus to die
Before a Roman did her villainy
"Did not Lucretia slay herself—alas!—
At Rome, when she so violated was
By Tarquin? For she thought it was a shame
Merely to live when she had lost her name
"The seven maidens of Miletus, too,
Did slay themselves, for very dread and woe,
Rather than men of Gaul should on them press.

In Abradates' wounds so deep and wide,

Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,
And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, allas!
Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witnesse;
Whan thretty tyraunts, ful of cursednesse,
Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte feste,
They comanded his doghtres for t'areste,
And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt
Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delyt,
And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mischaunce!
For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede,
Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede,
They prively ben stirt in-to a welle,
And dreynte hem-selven, as the bokes telle.
They of Messene lete enquere and seke
Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke,
On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye,
But was ther noon of al that companye
That she nas slayn, and with a good entente
Chees rather for to dye than assente
To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.
Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?
Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclides
That loved a mayden, heet Stimphalides,
Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,

Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
Now sith that maydens hadden swich despyt
To been defouled with mannes foul delyt,
Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me
What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
That at Cartage birafte hir-self hir lyf?
For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,
She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun
In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye
Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.
Hath nat Lucresse y-slayn hir-self, allas!
At Rome, whanne she oppressed was
Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a shame
To liven whan she hadde lost hir name?
The sevene maydens of Milesie also
Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde oppresse.
Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Coude I now telle as touchinge this matere
When Habradate was slayn, his wyf so dere
Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to glyde
In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
And seyde, "my body, at the leeste way,
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may"
What sholde I mo ensamples heer-of sayn,
Sith that so manye han hem-selven slayn
Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?
I wol conclude, that it is bet for me
To sleen my-self, than been defouled thus.
I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,
Or rather sleen my-self in som manere,

As dide *Demociones doghter dere*,
By-cause that she wolde not defouled be.
O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee,
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, allas!
That slowe hem selven for swich maner cas.
As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,
The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore

What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
That for swich cas birafte hir-self hir lyf?
How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
His love, that rather for to dyen chees
Than for to suffre his body unburied be!
Lo which a wyf was Alcestè," quod she
"What seith Omer of gode Penalopee?
Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee
Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus,

To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive.
The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesye
Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye.
O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee

But nathelees, upon the thridde night,
Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy knight,
And asked hir, why that she weep so sore?

And told him al as ye han herd bifore,
It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more
This housbond with glad chere, in freendly wyse,

It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day
Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!
For god so wisly have mercy on me,
I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,
For verray love which that I to yow have,
But-if ye sholde your trouthe kepe and save.
Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may kepe"—
But with that word he brast anon to wepe,
And seyde, "I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,
That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne breeth
To no wight tel thou of this aventure.
As I may best, I wol my wo endure,

As did Demotions's virgin daughter dear
Because she would not violated be
' O Cedasus, it rouses great pity
To read of how your daughters died, alas!
That slew themselves in such another case
"As great a pity was it, aye and more,
That a fair Theban maid, for Nicanor,
Did slay herself in such a kind of woe.
"Another Theban maiden did also,

His love, who chose to drain death to the lees
And would not let his corpse unburied be!
Lo, what a wife was Alcestis," said she
' What says Homer of good Penelope?
The whole of Hellas knew her chastity
"*Pardieu*, of Laodamia they wrote thus,
That when at Troy was slain Protesilaus,

Was honoured throughout all old Caria
' O Teuta, queen! Your wifely chastity,
To all wives may a very mirror be

And thereat she began to weep the more
"Alas!" cried she, "that ever I was born!
Thus have I said," quoth she, "thus have I sworn'—
And told him all, as you have heard before;
It needs not to re tell it to you more
This husband, with glad cheer, in friendly wise,

It may be well with us, perchance, today

But with that word began he then to weep,

Nor show a countenance of heaviness
That folk no harm may think of you or guess "
And then he called a squire and a maid
' Go forth anon with Dorigen he said
' And bring her to a certain place anon
They took their leave and on their way were gone,

Put his wife s honour thus in jeopardy
Hearken the tale, ere you upon her cry
She may have better luck than you suppose,
And when you ve heard all let your judgment close
This squire I ve told you of Aurelius,
Of Dorigen he being so amorous
Chanced as it seems his lady fair to meet
In middle town right in the busiest street,
As she was going forth as you have heard
Toward the garden where she d pledged her word
And he was going gardenward also
For he was always watching when she d go
Out of her house to any kind of place

Aurelius then pondered on this case,
And in his heart he had compassion great
On her and her lamenting and her state,
And on Arviragus the noble knight
Who d bidden her keep promise as she might,
Being so loath his wife should break with truth
And in his heart he gained from this great ruth,
Considering the best on every side
That from possession rather he d ab de
Than do so great a churlish grievousness
Against free hearts and all high nobleness
For which and in few words he told her thus

ruth)
Than you to me should break your word of truth,
I would myself far rather suffer woe
Than break apart the love between you two
So I release madam into your hand
And do return discharged each surety and
Each bond that you have given and have sworn,

Remember Dorigen and so beware!
Thus can a squire perform a gentle deed
As well as can a knight, of that take heed "

Ne make no contenance of hevinesse,
That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse "
And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde

He nolde no wight tellen his entente
02a]

She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth, [e]
And whan that ye han herd the tale demeth [f]
This squyer, which that highte Aurelius
On Dorigen that was so amorous,
Of aventure happed hir to mete
Amidde the toun, right in the quikkest strete,

But thus they mette, of aventure or grace,
And he saleweth hir with glad entente,
And asked of hir whiderward she wente?
And she answerde, half as she were mad,
"Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,
My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!"
Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
And in his herte had greet compassioun
Of hir and of hir lamentacioun,
And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,
That bad hir holden al that she had hight,
So looth him was his wyf sholde breke hir trouthe,
And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,
Consideringe the beste on every syde,
That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde
Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecchednesse
Agayns franchyse and alle gentillesse,
For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus
' Madame, seyth to your lord Arveragus,
That sith I see his grete gentillesse
To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse,
That him were lever han shame (and that were routhe)
Than ye to me sholde breke thus your throuthe,
I have wel lever ever to suffre wo
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two
I yow relesse, madame, in-to your *hond*
Quit every surement and every bond,
That ye han maad to me as heer biforn,
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born
My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
Of no biheste, and here I take my leve,
As of the treweste and the beste wyf
That ever yet I knew in al my lyf
But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,
On Dorigene remembreth atte leste
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,
As well as can a knight, with-outen drede "

She thonketh him up on hir knees al bare,
And hoom un to hir housbond is she fare,
And tolde him al as ye han herd me sayd,
And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd,
That it were inpossible me to wryte,
What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?
Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf
In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf
Never eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene,
He cherisseth hir as though she were a quene,
And she was to him trewe for evermore
Of thise two folk ye gete of me na more
Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,
Curseth the tyme that ever he was born
'*Allas*,' quod he, "*allas! that I bihighte*
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte
Un to this philosophre! how shal I do?
I see na more but that I am fordo
Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,
And been a begger, heer may I nat dwelle,
And shamen al my kinrede in this place,
But I of him may gete bettre grace
But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,

Upon her bare knees did she thank him there,
And home unto her husband d d she fare
And told him all as you have heard it said,

He cursed the time that ever he was born,
Alas! cried he Alas! that I did state

The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,
And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse
To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,
And seyde, '*maister, I dar wel make avaunt*,
I failled never of my trouthe as yit,
For sikerly my dette shal be quit
Towardes yow, how ever that I fare
To goon a begged in my kirtle bare
But wolde ye vouche sauf, up-on seurtee,
Two yeer or three for to respyten me,
Than were I wel, for elles moot I selle
Myn heritage, ther is na more to telle"
This philosophre sobrely answerde,

I ve never failed to keep my word as yet,
For certainly I ll pay my entire debt
To you ho vever after I may fare
Even to begging save for kirtle bare

And spoke in th s wise when these words he d heard
Have I not fairly earned my promised fee

Aurelius his tale anon bigan,
And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore,
It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more
He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse,
Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals"
The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,
How looth hir was to been a wikked wyf,
And that she lever had lost that day hir lyf,
And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh innocence
'She never erst herde speke of apparence,
That made me han of hir so greet pitee
And right as frely as he sente hir me,
As frely sente I hir to him ageyn
This al and som ther is na more to seyn."

Aurelius his tale anon began
And told him all as you have heard before
It needs not I repeat it to you more
He said Arviragus of nobleness

And that her troth she swore through ignorance
She d ne er before heard of such simulance
Wh ch made me have for *her such great pity*
And just as freely as he sent her me
As freely sent I her to h m again
This is the sum there s no more to explain

Then answered this philosopher 'Dear brother,
[illegible]

Which was most generous do you think and how?
Pray tell me this before you farther wend
I can no more, my tale is at an end

This philosophre answerde, "leve brother,
Everich of yow dide gentilly til other
Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight,
But god forbede, for his blisful might,
But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede
As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!
Sire, I relesse thee thy thousand pound,
As thou right now were cropen out of the ground,
Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me.
For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee
For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille
Thou hast y-payed wel for my vitaille,
[illegible]

Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
I can na-more, my tale is at an ende

HERE IS ENDED THE FRANKLIN'S TALE

THE PHYSICIAN'S TALE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE PHYSICIAN'S TALE[1]

There was as tells us Titus Livius
A knight whose name was called Virginius,
Fulfilled of honour and of worthiness
[illegible]

Above all others that a man may see
For Nature had, with sovereign diligence,
Moulded her to so great an excellence
She seemed to say 'Behold now, I, Nature,
Thus can I form and paint a creature pure
When I desire Who can it counterfeit?
Pygmalion? Nay, not though he forge and beat,
Or curve, or paint, and I dare say again,
Apelles, Zeuxis too should work in vain,
Either to carve or paint, or forge or beat,
If they presumed my work to counterfeit
For He Who is Creator Principal
[illegible]
And for my work I ask no payment vain,
My Lord and I are of one sole accord
I made her in the worship of my Lord
So do I other fair or foul creatures,
[illegible]
She did this creature by her art evoke
Ere she was born, painting her sweet limbs free
In such true colours as they'd come to be,

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight that called was Virginius,
[illegible]

For nature hath with sovereyn diligence
Y-formed hir in so greet excellence,
As though she wolde seyn, "lo! I, Nature,
Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
Whan that me list, who can me countrefete?
Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peynte, for I dar wel seyn,
Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
Outher to grave or peynte or forge or bete,
If they presumed me to countrefete
For he that is the former principal
Hath maked me his vicaire general,
To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
Right as me list, and ech thing in my cure is
Under the mone, that may wane and waxe,
And for my werk right no-thing wol I axe,
My lord and I ben ful of oon accord,
I made hir to the worship of my lord,
So do I alle myne othere creatures,
What colour that they han, or what figures"—
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye
This mayde of age twelf yeer was and tweye,
In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.
[illegible]

[1] The Prologue [11 929 34], held spurious by Skeat, is omitted

And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete
Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete
And if that excellent was hir beautee,
A thousand fold more vertuous was she
In hir ne lakked no condicioun,
That is to preyse, as by discrecioun
As wel in goost as body chast was she,
For which she floured in virginitee
With alle humilitee and abstinence,
With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
With mesure eek of bering and array
Discreet she was in answering alway
Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,
Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn,
No countrefeted termes hadde she
To seme wys, but after hir degree
She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse
Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse
Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse,
Constant in herte, and ever in bisinesse
To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye
Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye
For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,
As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece
And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,
She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
For that she wolde fleen the companye
Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
As is at festes revels, and at daunces
That been occasions of daliaunces
Swich thinges maken children for to be
To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore
For al to sone may she lerne lore
Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf
And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,

Lest ye be dampned for your wikke entente,
For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn
And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn,
Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence
Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or two,
Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce,
Whyl that they been under your governaunce
Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,
Or by your necligence in chastisinge,

In her there lacked not one condition known

And with all temperance and with patience

As when on fire is scattered oil or grease
And of her virtue free and unconstrained
She had ofttimes some little illness feigned
In order to avoid a company
Which likely was to do some great folly
As people do at revels and at dances
Which are occasions when young folk take chances
Such things but make young men and maidens be

You governesses who in older life
Have great lords daughters in your governance
Take from my words no foolish petulance

Look that to no vice do you give assent
Lest you be damned for your so vile intent,
For who does thus is traitor that's certain
And take good care that I speak not in vain
Of treacheries all the sovereign pestilence

They fall and perish for I dare well say,
If that should chance you ll dearly have to pay
Under a shepherd soft and negligent
Full many a sheep and lamb by wolf is rent
Suffice one instance as I give it here
For I must in my story persevere
  This maid of whom I do this praise express,
Guarded herself nor needed governess
For in her daily life all maids might read
As in a book every good word or deed
That might become a maiden virtuous
She was so prudent and so bounteous

That sorry is when others live in weal
And for their woe will ever gladness feel
(Doctor Augustine s are these words I own)
  This maid upon a day went into town
Unto a temple with her mother dear
As the wont is of young maids everywhere
  Now there was then a justice in that town
Was governor of all the reg on known
And so befell th s judge his two eyes cast
Upon this maid noting her beauty fast
As she went by the place wherein he stood
Swiftly his heart was altered and his mood
He was so caught by beauty of the maid
And to his own dark secret heart he said
  She shall be mine in spite of any man!
  Anon the Fiend into his bosom ran
And taught him swiftly how by treachery,
The maiden to his purpose might win he
For truly not to bribery or force
Would it avail he thought to have recourse,
Since she had many friends and was so good
So strong in virtue that he never could
By any subtle means her favour win
And make her give her body unto sin
Therefore and with great scheming up and down
He sent to find a fellow of the town

Glad was the judge and then he made great cheer

Home went the churl whose name was Claudius
This false judge who was known as Appius
(*Such was his name for this is no fable*
But an historical event I tell!
At least the gist is true beyond a doubt)—
This false judge goes now busily about
To hasten his delight in all he may
And so befell soon after, on a day,

That they ne perisse, for I dar wel seye,
If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye
Under a shepherde softe and necligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent
Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,
For I mot turne agayn to my matere
  This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse,
So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistresse,
For in hir living maydens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word or dede,
That longeth to a mayden vertuous,
She was so prudent and so bountevous
For which the fame out sprong on every syde
Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde,
That thurgh that land they preysed hir echone,
That loved vertu, save envye allone,
That sory is of other mennes wele,
And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele,
(The doctour maketh this descripcioun)
  This mayde up-on a day wente in the toun
Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,
As is of yonge maydens the manere
  Now was ther thanne a justice in that toun,

Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this mayde,
And to him self ful prively he sayde,
"*This mayde shal be myn, for any man*"
  Anon the feend in to his herte ran,
And taughte him sodeynly, that he by slighte
The mayden to his purpos winne mighte
For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
Him thoughte, he was nat able for to spede,
For she was strong of freendes, and eek she
Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
That wel he wiste he mighte hir never winne
As for to make hir with hir body sinne
For which, by greet deliberacioun,
He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,
Which that he knew for subtil and for bold
This juge un to this cherl his tale hath told
In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,
He sholde telle it to no creature,
And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed
Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
Glad was this juge and maked him greet chere,
And yaf him yiftes preciouse and dere
  Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye

This false juge gooth now faste aboute
To hasten his delyt al that he may
And so bifel sone after, on a day,

This false juge, as telleth us the storie,
As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas
This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,
And seyde, "lord, if that it be your wille,
As dooth me right up-on this pitous bille,
In which I pleyne up-on Virginius
And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,
I wol it preve, and finde good witnesse,
That sooth is that my bille wol expresse"
The juge answerde, "of this, in his absence,
I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence
Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here,
Thou shalt have al right, and no wrong here."
Virginius cam, to wite the juges wille,
And right anon was rad this cursed bille,
The sentence of it was as ye shul here
"To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,
Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,
How that a knight, called Virginius,

Ne here a word more of Virginius,
But yaf his jugement, and seyde thus —
"I deme anon this cherl his servant have,

This false judge, as recounts the ancient story,
As he was wont, sat in his auditory
And gave his judgment upon every case
Forthwith the wicked churl advanced a pace,

Whom I have bred up with so deep pleasance
That you were never from my remembrance!
O daughter who are now my final woe,
Aye, and in life my final joy also,

O gem of chastity, in brave patience
Receive your death, for that is my sentence.

About his neck, as she was wont to do,

"Then give me leisure, father mine,"
quoth she,
"But to lament my death a little space,
For even Jephtha gave his daughter grace
To weep a little ere he slew, alas!
And God knows that in naught did she trespass,
Save that she ran to be the first to see
And welcome him with greetings, merrily "
And with that word she fell into a swoon,
And after, when the faint was past and gone,
She rose up and unto her father said
"Praise be to God that I shall die a maid

But then a thousand people rose and sprang
To save the knight, for ruth and for pity,
For known was now the false iniquity
The people had suspected some such thing,
By the churl's manner in his challenging,

The rest were hanged, the greater and the less,
Who had been parties to this wickedness
Here may men see how sin has its desert!
Beware, for no man knows whom God will
hurt,

O gemme of chastitee, in pacience
Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence
For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed,
My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.
Allas! that ever Apius thee say!
Thus hath he falsly juged thee to-day"—
And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore
Han herd, nat nedeth for to telle it more.
"O mercy, dere fader," quod this mayde,
And with that word she both hir armes layde
About his nekke, as she was wont to do.
The teres broste out of hir eyen two,
And seyde, "gode fader, shal I dye?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?"
"No, certes, dere doghter myn," quod he.
"Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,"
quod she,
"My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
For pardee, Jepte yaf his doghter grace
For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas!
And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
But for she ran hir fader first to see,
To welcome him with greet solempnitee "
And with that word she fil aswowne anon,
And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
"Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.
Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame,
Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name!"
And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,

And to the juge he gan it to presente,
As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
And whan the juge it saugh, as seith the storie,
He bad to take him and anhange him faste
But right anon a thousand peple in thraste,
To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,
For knowen was the false iniquitee
The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,
By manere of the cherles chalanging,
That it was by th'assent of Apius,
They wisten wel that he was lecherous.
For which un-to this Apius they gon,
And caste him in a prison right anon,
Wher-as he slow him-self, and Claudius,
That servant was un-to this Apius,
Was demed for to hange upon a tree,
But that Virginius, of his pitee,
So preyde for him that he was exyled,
And elles, certes, he had been bigyled
The remenant were anhanged, more and lesse,
That were consentant of this cursednesse —
Heer men may seen how sinne hath his meryte!
Beth war, for no man woot whom god wol
smyte
In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
The worm of conscience may agryse
Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,
That no man woot ther-of but god and he.

For be he lewed man, or elles lered,
He noot how sone that he shal been afered.
Therfore I rede yow this conseil take,
Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

HERE ENDETH THE PHYSICIAN'S TALE

THE WORDS OF THE HOST

THE WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE PHYSICIAN AND THE PARDONER

Our Hoste gan to swere as he were wood,
"Harrow!" quod he, "by nayles and by blood!
This was a fals cherl and a fals justyse!
As shamful deeth as herte may devyse
Come to thise juges and hir advocats!
Algate this sely mayde is slayn, allas!
Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!
Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
That yiftes of fortune or of nature
Ben cause of deeth to many a creature.
Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;
Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!
Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
Men han ful ofte more harm than prow.
But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,
This is a pitous tale for to here.
But natheles, passe over, is no fors,
I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,
And eek thyne urinals and thy jordanes,
Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
And every boist ful of thy letuarie,
God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie!
So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
And lyk a prelat, by seint Ronyan!
Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in terme,

"Tel us som mirthe or japes right anon."

Come to such judge who such a helper has!
And so this luckless maid is slain, alas!
Alas too dearly paid she for beauty!
Wherefore I always say, as men may see,
That Fortune's gifts or those of Dame Nature,
Are cause of death to many a good creature.
Her beauty was her death, I say again,
Alas, so pitiably she there was slain!

Yet let us pass it by as of no force

You, *bon ami*, you pardoner," he said,

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONER'S TALE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONER'S TALE

Radix malorum est Cupiditas Ad Thimotheum, sexto

"Masters," quoth he, "in churches, when I preach,
I am at pains that all shall hear my speech,
And ring it out as roundly as a bell,
For I know all by heart the thing I tell.
My theme is always one, and ever was
'*Radix malorum est cupiditas*.'
"First I announce the place whence I have come,
And then I show my pardons, all and some
Our liege lord's seal on my patent perfect,

Indulgences of pope and cardinal,
Of patriarch and bishop, these I do
Show, and in Latin speak some words, a few,

Relics are these, as they think, every one
Then I've in latten box a shoulder bone
Which came out of a holy Hebrew's sheep

Of pox and scab and every other sore
Shall every sheep be healed that of this well
Drinks but one draught, take heed of what I tell
And if the man that owns the beasts, I trow,

And, good sirs, it's a cure for jealousy,

"Lordings," quod he, "in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote that I telle
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—
'*Radix malorum est Cupiditas*.'
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk,
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe,
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire men to devocioun
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones,
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
'Good men,' seye I, 'tak of my wordes kepe;
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon, and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte, tak kepe eek what I telle.
If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste,
Al had she taken preestes two or three
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes
[illegible] I vow,

Or any womman be she yong or old,
That hath y maad hir housbond cokewold,
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
To offren to my reliks in this place
And who so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
And I assoille him by the auctoritee
Which that by bulle y graunted was to me'
By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark sith I wa Pardoner
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun y set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
And telle an hundred false japes more
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,

Is al my preching for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely un to me
For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne
I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a blakeberied!
For certes, many a predicacioun
Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun,
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ipocrisye,
And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate
For whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespased to my brethren or
to me
For, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same

But shortly myn entente I wol devyse,
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse
Therfor my theme is yet and ever was—
Radix malorum est cupiditas
Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce

… thinges can they wel reporte and holde
What? trowe ye, the whyles I may
preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche,

Or any woman be she young or old
That s made her husband into a cuckold
Such folk shall have no power and no grace
To offer to my relics in this place

A hundred marks since I ve been pardoner
I stand up like a scholar in pulpit
And when the ignorant people all do sit
I preach as you have heard me say before
And tell a hundred false japes less or more.
I am at pains then to stretch forth my neck
And east and west upon the folk I beck
As does a dove that s sitting on a barn
With hands and swift tongue then do I so yarn
That it s a joy to see my busyness
Of avarice and of all such wickedness
Is all my preaching thus to make them free
With offered pence the which pence come to me
For my intent is only pence to win
And not at all for punishment of sin

And some for vainglory and some for hate
For when I dare not otherwise debate
Then do I sharpen well my tongue and sting
The man in sermons and upon him fling
My lying defamations if but he
Has wronged my brethren or—much worse—
wronged me
For though I mention not his proper name
Men kno v whom I refer to all the same
By signs I make and other circumstances
Thus I pay those who do us displeasances.
Thus spit I out my venom under hue
Of holiness to seem both good and true
But briefly my intention I ll express
I preach no sermon save for covetousness
For that my theme is yet and ever was
Radix malorum est cupiditas

But that is not my principal intent
I preach no sermon save for covetousness
This should suffice of that though as I guess

ing
And win me gold and silver by my teaching

I'll live of my free will in poverty?
No, no, that's never been my policy!
For I will preach and beg in sundry lands,
I will not work and labour with my hands,
Nor baskets weave and try to live thereby,
Because I will not beg in vain, say I
I will none of the apostles counterfeit,
I will have money, wool, and cheese, and wheat,
[illegible]

But hearken, masters, to conclusion shown
Your wish is that I tell you all a tale
[illegible]

The which I'm wont to preach more gold to win
Now hold your peace! my tale I will begin"

That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
[illegible]
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun
But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale
Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne"

THE PARDONER'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE PARDONER'S TALE

[illegible]
And, to the music of harps lutes, gitterns,
They danced and played at dice both day and
night,
And ate also and drank beyond their might,
Whereby they made the devil's sacrifice
Within that devil's temple, wicked wise,
By superfluity both vile and vain
So damnable their oaths and so profane
That it was terrible to hear them swear,
Our Blessed Saviour's Body did they tear,
[illegible]
Which is so closely joined with gluttony
[illegible]

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes,
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and girnes,
They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and
night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifyse
With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
By superfluitee abhominable;
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly for to here hem swere,
Our blissed lordes body they to-tere,
Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght y-nough;
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough
And right anon than comen tombesteres
Fetys and smale, and yonge fruytesteres,
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed un-to glotonye,
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse
Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,
Lay by his doghtres two, unwitingly,
So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.
[illegible]
Senek seith eek a good word douteless;
He seith, he can no difference finde
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde

And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun,
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye,
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!
  Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede,
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys, and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree,
Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne

In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke

Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee

grinde,
And turnen substaunce in to accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght a wey
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote,
Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt
But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
Is deed, whyl [illegible]

As though thou seydest ay "Sampsoun, Sampsoun",

And one that s drunken, save perhaps in this
That when a wretch in madness fallen is
The state lasts longer than does drunkenness

Adam our father and his wife also
From Paradise to labour and to woe

Anon he was cast out to woe and pain
O gluttony, of you we may complain!
Oh! knew a man how many maladies
Follow on excess and on gluttonies
Surely he would be then more moderate
In diet and at table more sedate
Alas! The throat so short, the tender mouth,

Your food! These cooks they pound and strain and grind
Substance to accident they turn with fire,

Is full of striving and of wretchedness.
O drunken man disfigured is your face
Sour is your breath foul are you to embrace,
And through your drunken nose there comes a sound
As if you snored out Samson, Samson '
round,

And yet God knows that Samson drank no wine
You fall down just as if you were stuck swine
Your tongue is loose your honest care obscure
For drunkenness is very sepulture
Of any mind a man may chance to own
In whom strong drink has domination shown
He can no counsel keep for any dread
Now keep you from the white and from the red

That when a man has drunk two draughts, or three
And thinks himself to be at home in Cheap
He f nds that he s in Spa n and right at Lepe —
Not at Rochelle nor yet at Bordeaux town
And then will he snore out Samson Samson
But hearken masters one word more I pray
The greatest deeds of all I m bold to say
Of victories in the old testament
Through the True God Who is omnipotent
Were gained by abstinence and after prayer
Look in the Bible you may learn this there
Lo Attila the m ghty conqueror
Died n h s sleep in shame and dishonour
And bleeding at the nose for drunkenness,
A great captain should live in soberness
Above all this advise yourself right well
What was commanded unto Lemuel—
Not Samuel but Lemuel say I—
The Bible s words you cannot well deny
Drinking by magistrates is called a vice
No more of this for it may well suffice

Blaspheming murder and—what s more—the waste
Of t me and money add to which debased
And shamed and lost to honour quite is he
Who once a common gambler s kno vn to be
And ever the higher one is of estate
The more he s held d sgraced and desolate
And if a prince plays s milar hazardry
In all h s government and pol cy
He loses in the estimate of men
His good repute and finds it not again
Ch lon who was a wise ambassador
Was sent to Corinth all in great honour
From Lacedaemon to make all ance
And when he came he noticed there by chance,
All of the greatest people of the land
Playing at hazard there on every hand
Wherefore and all as soon as it might be
He stole off home again to his country
And sa d I will not thus debase my name,
Nor will I take upon me so great shame
You to ally with common hazarders
Send if you will other ambassadors
For by my truth I say I d ratl er die

And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn
Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn,
Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure,
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun
In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in Fish strete or in Chepe
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes, growing fast by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
Than whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun,
And thanne wol he seye, Sampsoun, Sampsoun "
But herkneth lordings, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes dar I seye,
Of victories in th olde testament,
Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere,
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere
Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse,
A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded un to Lamuel—
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
Of wyn yeving to hem that han justyse
Na more of this, for it may wel suffyse
And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges
And of deceite and cursed forsweringes,
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
Of catel and of tyme, and forthermo,
It is repreve and contrarie of honour
For to ben holde a commune hasardour
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,
The more is he holden desolaat
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Y holde the lasse in reputacioun
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir allaunce
And whan he cam him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, ther wol I nat lese my name,
N I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yowe for to allye un to none hasardours
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours,
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,

Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee'
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he
  Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther biforn,
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y nough to dryve the day awey
  Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete

And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse ,
But ydel swering is a cursednesse
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honurable,
How that the seconde heste of his is this—
'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis "
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing,
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth,
This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second heste of god is that
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,

By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This dagger shal thurgh out thyn herte go"—
This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,
Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde
Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale,
But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale
  Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke,

He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres,
And sodeynly he was y slayn to night,

Than you with gamblers like to them ally
For you that are so glorious in honours
Shall never ally yourselves with hazarders
By my consent or treaty I have made'
This wise philosopher twas thus he said
  Let us look then at King Demetrius
The king of Parthia as the book tells us
Sent him a pair of golden dice in scorn
Because the name of gambler he had borne,
Wherefore he marked his reputat on down
As valuel ss despite his wide renown
Great lords may find sufficient other play
Seemly enough to wh le the time away
  Now will I speak of oaths both false and great
A word or two whereof the old books treat
Great swearing is a thing abominable
And vain oaths yet more reprehensible
The High God did forb d swearing at all
As w tness Matthew but in especial
Of swearing says the holy Jeremiah
  Thou shalt not swear in vain to be a liar,

  Thou shalt not take the Lord God s name in vain
Nay sooner He forb ds us such swearing
Than homicide or many a wicked thing
I say that as to order thus it stands
'Tis known by him who His will understands
That the great second law of God is that
Moreover I will tell you full and flat
That retribution will not quit his house
Who in his swearing is too outrageous
  By God s own precious heart and by His nails,
And by the blood of Christ that s now at Hales

Perjury anger cheating homicide
Now for the love of Christ Who for us died
Forgo this swearing oaths both great and small,
But s rs now will I tell to you my tale
  Now these three ro sterers whereof I tell,
Long before prime was rung by any bell
Were s tting in a tavern for to drink
And as they sat they heard a small bell clink
Before a corpse being carried to h s grave,
Whe eat one of them called unto his knave
  Go run said he and ask them civilly

And went his way and made no more ado
He s slain a thousand with this pestilence
And master, ere you come in his presence
It seems to me to be right necessary
To be forewarned of such an adversary
Be ready to meet him for evermore
My mother taught me this I say no more '
By holy Mary said the innkeeper
' The boy speaks truth for Death has slain this year
A mile or more hence in a large village
Both man and woman child and hind and page
I think his habitation must be there
To be advised of him great wisdom twere
Before he did a man some dishonour
Yea by God s arms! exclaimed this roisterer,
' Is it such peril then this Death to meet?
I ll seek him in the road and in the street
As I now vow to God s own noble bones!
Hear comrades we re of one mind as each owns
Let each of us hold up his hand to other
And each of us become the other s brother
And we three will go slay this traitor Death

And up they started drunken in this rage
And forth they went and towards that village
Whereof the innkeeper had told before

Thus restless I my wretched way must make

And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie
Beth redy for to mete him evermore
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na more "
"By seinte Marie," seyde this taverner,
"The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer
Henne over a myle, with in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page
I trowe his habitacioun be there,
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour "
' Ye, goddes armes," quod this ryotour
' Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones,
Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth,
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By goddes dignitee, er it be night "
Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
As though he were his owene y boren brother
And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to rente—
"Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente "
Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
An old man and a povre with hem mette
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus, ' now, lordes, god yow see!"
The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, "what? carl, with sory grace,
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?"
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, for I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age,
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is goddes wille
Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf,
Thus walke I, lyk a resteleès caityf,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
Iknokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, 'leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!'
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face

But, sires, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your self wel rede,
'Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse', wherfor I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde,
And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde
I moot go thider as I have to go."
"Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,"
Seyde this other hasardour anon,
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye,
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abye,
By god, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!"
"Now, sirs," quod he, "if that yow be so leef

The worste of hem he spake the firste word
"Brethren," quod he, "tak kepe what I seye,
My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye
This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven,
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende

Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,

When it is night, we wol this tresor carie

"But, sirs, in you it is no courtesy
To speak to an old man despitefully,
Unless in word he trespass or in deed.
In holy writ you may, yourselves, well read
'Before an old man, hoar upon the head,
You should arise' Which I advise you read,

And God be with you, whether you walk or ride.
I must pass on now where I have to go"
"Nay, ancient churl, by God it sha'n't be so,"
Cried out this other hazarder, anon,

By God and by the holy Sacrament!
Indeed you must be, with this Death, intent
To slay all us young people, you false thief"
"Now, sirs," said he, "if you're so keen, in brief,

And mend your ways!"—thus said this ancient man
And every one of these three roisterers ran

But each of them so glad was of that sight,
Because the florins were so fair and bright,

Then were we all in high felicity

Where by agreement we may think it best
That one of them the cuts brought in his fist
And bade them draw to see where it might fall,
And it fell on the youngest of them all
And so forth toward the town he went anon
And just as soon as he had turned and gone,
That one of them spoke thus unto the other
You know well that you are my own sworn brother
So to your profit I will speak anon
You know well how our comrade is just gone,
And here is gold and that in great plenty,
That's to be parted here among us three
Nevertheless if I can shape it so
That it be parted only by us two
Shall I not do a turn that is friendly?
The other said Well now how can that be?
He knows well that the gold is with us two
What shall we say to him? What shall we do?
Shall it be secret? asked the first rogue then
And I will tell you in eight words or ten
What we must do and how bring it about
Agreed replied the other Never doubt,
That, on my word I nothing will betray
Now said the first, we're two and I dare say
The two of us are stronger than is one
Watch when he sits and soon as that is done
Arise and make as if with him to play
And I will thrust him through the two sides yea
The while you romp with him as in a game
And with your dagger see you do the same
And then shall all this gold divided be
My right dear friend just between you and me
Then may we both our every wish fulfill
And play at dice all at our own sweet will
And thus agreed were these two rogues that day
To slay the third as you have heard me say
This youngest rogue who'd gone into the town,
Often in fancy rolled he up and down
The beauty of those florins new and bright
O Lord thought he if so be that I might
Have all this treasure to myself alone
There is no man who lives beneath the throne
Of God that should be then so merry as I
And at the last the Fiend our enemy
Put in his thought that he should poison buy
With which he might kill both his fellows aye
The Devil found him in such wicked state
He had full leave his grief to consummate
For it was utterly the man's intent
To kill them both and never to repent
And on he strode no longer would he tarry
Into the town to an apothecary
And prayed of him that he'd prepare and sell
Some poison for his rats, and some as well
For a polecat that in his yard had lain,
The which he said his capons there had slain
And fain he was to rid him if he might
Of vermin that thus damaged him by night
The apothecary said And you shall have
A thing of which so God my spirit save,

By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best"
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle,
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle,
And forth toward the toun he wente anon
And al so sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un to that other,
"Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother,
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon,
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed been among us three
But natheles, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?"
That other answerde, I noot how that may be,
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?'
'Shal it be conseil?" seyde the firste shrewe,
"And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute"
'I graunte,' quod that other, out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye'
'Now," quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye,
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same,
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee,
Than may be bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille"
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye
This yongest, which that wente un to the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte
"O lord quod he, if so were that I mighte
Have al this tresor to my self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!'
And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye,
For why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un to a pothecarie,
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle,
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y slawe,
And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte
The pothecarie answerde, "and thou shalt have
A thing that, al so god my soule save,

In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle,
This poyson is so strong and violent '
  This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box and sith he ran
In to the nexte strete, un to a man,
And borwed [of] him large botels three,
And in the two his poyson poured he,
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke

  What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
  Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie '
  And with that word it happed him, par cas,
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two
  But, certes, I suppose that Avicen

And eek the false empoysoner also
  O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye

And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon,
In to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon
I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born
    and, lo, sirs, thus I preche
And Jesu Crist that is our soules leche,
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve,
For that is best, I wol yow nat deceyve
  But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male,
As faire as any man in Engelond,

In all th s world there is no live creature
That s eaten or has drunk of this mixture
As much as equals but a grain of wheat
That shall not sudden death thereafter meet
Yea die he shall and in a shorter while
Than you requ re to walk but one short mile
This po son is so violent and strong
  This wicked man the poison took along
With h m boxed up and then he straightway ran
Into the street adjoining to a man
And of h m borrowed generous bottles three
And into two his po son then poured he
The third one he kept clean for his own drink

And when the thing was done then spoke the one
  Now let us s t and drink and so be merry
And afterward we will his body bury
  And as he spoke one bottle of the three
He took wherein the poison chanced to be
And drank and gave his comrade drink also
For which and that anon lay dead these two
  I feel qu te sure that Doctor Avicena
Within the sections of his *Canon* never
Set down more certain signs of poisoning
Than showed these wretches two at their ending
Thus ended these two homicides in woe
Died thus the treacherous poisoner also
  O cursed sin full of abominableness!
O treacherous hom c de! O wickedness!
O gluttony lechery and hazardry!
O blasphemer of Christ with villainy

And keep you from the sin of avar ce
My holy pardon cures and will suffice
So that it brings me gold or silver brings

As you were born
    And lo sirs thus I preach

The which I got by kindness of the pope
If gifts your change of heart and mind reveal
You ll get my absolution while you kneel
Come forth and kneel down here before anon,
And humbly you ll receive my full pardon,
Or else receive a pardon as you wend
All new and fresh as every mile shall end
So that you offer me each time anew
More gold and silver all good coins and true
It is an honour to each one that s here
That you may have a competent pardoner
To give you absolution as you ride
For all adventures that may still betide
Perchance from horse may fall down one or two,
Breaking his neck and it might well be you
See what insurance then it is for all
That I within your fellowship did fall
Who may absolve you both the great and less
When soul from body passes, as I guess
I think our host might just as well begin
For he is most enveloped in all sin
Come forth sir host and offer first anon
And you shall kiss the relics every one
Aye for a groat! Unbuckle now your purse
Nay nay said he then may I have Christ s curse!
It shan t be said he as I ve hope for riches,
Why you would have me kissing your old breeches
And swear they were the relics of a saint
Though with your excrement twere dabbed like paint
By cross Saint Helen found in Holy Land
I would I had your ballocks in my hand
Instead of relics in a reliquary
Let s cut them off and them I ll help you carry
They shall be shrined within a hog s fat turd
This pardoner he answered not a word
So wrathy was he no word would he say
Now said our host, I will no longer play
With you nor any other angry man
But at this point the worthy knight began
When that he saw how all the folk did laugh
' No more of this for it s gone far enough,
Sir pardoner be glad and merry here
And you sir host who are to me so dear
I pray you that you kiss the pardoner
And pardoner I pray you to draw near
And as we did before let s laugh and play
And then they kissed and rode forth on their way

Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond,
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is heer,
That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
T'assoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bityde
Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo
Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
That I am in your felaweship y falle,
That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe
I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne
Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs
' Nay, nay," quod he, "than have I Cristes curs!
Lat be ' quod he, ' it shal nat be, so thee'ch!
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech,
And swere it were a relik of a seint,
Thogh it were with thy fundement depeint!
But by the croys which that seint Eleyne fond,
I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
In stede of relikes or of seintuarie,
Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie,
They shul be shryned in an hogges tord '
This pardoner answerde nat a word,
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye
Now, ' quod our host, I wol no lenger pleye
With thee, ne with noon other angry man. '
But right anon the worthy Knight bigan,
Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
' Na more of this, for it is right y-nough,
Sir Pardoner, be glad and mery of chere,
And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner
And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye "
Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye

HERE IS ENDED THE PARDONER S TALE

THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE

HERE BEGINNETH THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE

Our host upon his stirrups stood anon
And said Good men now hearken every one,
This was a useful story for the nonce!
Sir parish priest quoth he for God His bones,
Tell us a tale, as you agreed before

Our hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,
And seyde, good men, herkneth everich on,
This was a thrifty tale for the nones!
Sir parish prest, quod he, ' for goddes bones,
Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore

I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!"
  The Persone him answerde, "*ben'cite!*
What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere?"
  Our hoste answerde, "O Jankin, be ye there?
I smelle a *loller* in the wind," quod he
"How! good men," quod our hoste, "herkneth me;
Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun,
For we shal han a predicacioun,
This loller heer wil prechen us som-what."
  "Nay, by my fader soule! that shal he nat,"
Seyde the Shipman, "heer he shal nat preche,
He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche
We leve alle in the grete god," quod he,
"*He wolde sowen som difficultee*,
Or springen cokkel in our clene corn,
And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
My joly body shal a tale telle,
And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,
That I shal waken al this companye,
But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
Ne *phisices*, ne termes queinte of lawe,
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe"

I see well that you learned men of lore
Have learned much good, by God's great dignity!"
  The parson answered '*Benedicite!*
What ails the man, so sinfully to swear?'
  Our host replied "Ho, Jenkin, are you there?
I smell a Lollard in the wind," quoth he.
  Ho, good men!' said our host, 'now hearken me
Wait but a bit, for God's high passion do,
For we shall have a sermon ere we're through,
This Lollard here will preach to us somewhat"
  "Nay, by my father's soul that shall he not!"
Replied the sailor, 'Here he shall not preach,
Nor comment on the gospels here, nor teach.
We all believe in the great God" said he,
  But he would sow among us difficulty,
Or sprinkle cockles in our good clean corn;
And therefore, host beforehand now, I warn
My jolly body shall a story tell
And I will clink for you so merry a bell
That it shall waken all this company,
But it shall not be of philosophy,
Nor yet of physics, nor quaint terms of law;
There is but little Latin in my maw"

HERE ENDETH THE SHIPMAN HIS PROLOGUE

THE SHIPMAN'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE SHIPMAN'S TALE

A Marchant whylom dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which men helde him wys,
A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence
Than worth is al the chere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes and at daunces,
Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal
But wo is him that payen moot for al,
The sely housbond, *algate he mot paye*,
He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,
Al for his owene worship richely,
In which array we daunce jolily
And if that he noght may, par-aventure,
Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
Than *moot another payen for our cost*,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous
  This noble Marchant heeld a worthy hous,
For which he hadde alday so greet repair
For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
That wonder is, but herkneth to my tale.
Amonges alle his gestes, grete and smale,
Ther was a *monk, a fair man and a bold*,'
I trowe of thritty winter he was old,
That ever in oon was drawing to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
Aqueinted was so with the gode man,
Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan,

A merchant, dwelling, once, at Saint Denis,
Was rich, for which men held him wise, and he
Had got a wife of excellent beauty,
And very sociable and gay was she,
Which is a thing that causes more expense
Than all the good cheer and the deference
That men observe at festivals and dances;
Such salutations and masked countenances
Pass by as does a shadow on the wall,
But woe to him that must pay for it all
The foolish husband, always he must pay,
He must buy clothes and other fine array,
And all for his own worship, wealthily,
In which, indeed, women dance jollily
And if he cannot thus, peradventure,
Or cares not such expenses to endure,
But thinks his money wasted or quite lost,
Why then *another man must pay the cost*,
Or else lend gold and that is dangerous.
  This noble merchant had a worthy house,
To which, each day, so many did repair,
Since he was generous and his wife was fair,
'Twas to be wondered at, but hear my tale
Among his many guests of great and small
There was a monk, a handsome man and bold,
I think that he was thirty winters old
Who was for ever coming to that place
This youthful monk, who was so fair of face,
Was so far intimate with the worthy man,
And had been since their friendship first began,

That in the house familiar was he
As it is possible for friend to be
And in as much as this same goodly man
And too this monk of whom I first began
Were both born in the village they'd lived in
The monk claimed him for cousin or such kin
And he again he never said him nay
But was as glad thereof as bird of day
For to his heart it was a great pleasance
Thus they were knit by endless alliance,
And each of them did other one assure
Of brotherhood the while their lives endure
Free was Dan John with money and expense
When in that house and full of diligence
To please all there whatever be his age
He ne'er forgot to tip the humblest page
In all that house according to degree
He gave the master then the company,
Whene'er he came some kind of honest thing
For which they were as glad of his coming
As bird is glad when the new sun up rises
No more of all this now for it suffices
It so befell this merchant on a day
Prepared to make all ready his array
Since to the town of Bruges he was to fare
To purchase there a quantity of ware
To which end he'd to Paris sent someone
With messages and he had prayed Dan John
That he should come to Saint Denis to pay
Him and his wife a visit for a day
Said 'twas a thing he certainly must do
This noble monk whereof I'm telling you
Had from his abbot when he wished license,
Because he was a man of great prudence,
An officer indeed who out did ride
To see to barns and granges, far and wide
And now to Saint Denis he came anon
Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John
Our cousin dear so full of courtesy?
With him he brought a jug of rare malmsey
And still another full of fine vernage[1]
And wild fowls too, as was his long usage
And so I let them eat and drink and play
This monk and merchant, for a night and day
Upon the third day this good trader rises
And on his needs discreetly he advises
And up into his counting house goes he
To reckon up his books as well may be
For the past year to learn how matters stood
And what he'd spent and whether it were good
And whether he were wealthier than before
His books and bags all that he had in store
He put before him on his counting board
He was right rich in goods and rich in hoard
For the which cause he bolted fast his door,
He'd have no one disturb him while before
Him stood his books and monies at that time
And thus he sat till it was well past prime
Dan John had risen with the dawn also
And in the garden wandered to and fro
Having said all his prayers full reverently

That in his hous a famulier was he
As it possible is any freend to be
And for as muchel as this gode man
And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
Were bothe two y-born in o village,
The monk him claimeth as for cosinage,
And he agayn, he seith nat ones nay,
But was as glad ther of as fowel of day,
For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce
Thus been they knit with eterne alliaunce,
And ech of hem gan other for t'assure
Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may dure
Free was daun John, and namely of dispence,
As in that hous, and ful of diligence
To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage.
He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page
In al that hous, but, after hir degree,
He yaf the lord, and sitthe al his meynee,
When that he cam, som maner honest thing,
For which they were as glad of his cominge
As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne up ryseth
Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth
But so bifel, this marchant on a day
Shoop him to make redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare,
To byën ther a porcioun of ware,
For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messager, and preyed hath daun John
That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye
With him and with his wyf a day or tweye,
Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse
This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
And eek an officer, out for to ryde,
To seen hir graunges and hir bernes wyde,
And un to Seint Denys he comth anon
Who was so welcome as my lord daun John,
Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?
With him broghte he a jubbe of Malvesye,
And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage,[1]
And volatyl, as ay was his usage
And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye
The thridde day, this marchant up aryseth,
And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
And up in to his contour hous goth he
To rekene with him self, as wel may be,
Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
And how that he despended hadde his good,
And if that he encressed were or noon
His bokes and his bagges many oon
He leith biforn him on his counting bord,
Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,
For which ful faste his contour dore he shette,
And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette
Of his accountes, for the mene tyme,
And thus he sit til it was passed pryme
Daun John was risen in the morwe also,
And in the gardin walketh to and fro,
And hath his thinges seyd ful curteisly

[1] An old wine of Italy

This gode wyf cam walking prively
In to the gardin ther he walketh softe,
And him saleweth as she hath don ofte
A mayde child cam in hir companye,
Which as hir list she may governe and gye,
For yet under the yerde was the mayde
O dere cosin myn daun John she sayde,
'What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse?
'Nece quod he it oghte y nough suffyse
Fyve houres for to slepe up on a night,
But t were for an old appalled wight
As been thise wedded men that lye and dare
As in a forme s t a wery hare
Were al for-straught with houndes grete and
smale
But dere nece why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes that our gode man
Hath yow laboured sith the night b gan
That yow were nede to resten hastily?

For by that god that yaf me soule and lyf,

Al your anoy for t shal been secree
For on my porthors here I make an ooth

Martyn
He is na more cosin un to me
Than s this leef that hangeth on the tree!
I clepe him so by Seint Denys of Fraunce,

Then came th s goodwife walking secretly
Into the garden walk ng slow and soft

As are these married men who doze and dare
About as in the form the weary hare
Worn all d straught by hounds both great and
small
But my dear n ece just why are you so pale?
I must suppose of course that our good man
Has you belaboured s nce the n ght began
And you were forced to sleep but scant ly
And w th that word he laughed r ght merr ly
And what of h s own thoughts he blushed all red
Th s pretty w fe began to shake her head
And answered thus Aye God knows all! sa d she
Nay cous n m ne t stands not so w th me
For by that God Who gave me soul and life
In all the realm of France there s no w fe

I am so fearful and so full of care
Th s monk began then at the wife to stare
And said Alas my n ece may God forb d

But ve ly fo lo e and true rel ance

From my husband though he s your cous n
Nay quoth the monk by God and Sa nt
Mart n
He s no more a cou n unto me
Than s this leaf a hanging on the tree!
I call him so by Saint Denis of France,

To have but better reason to advance
With you whom I have loved especially
Above all other women and truly,
I swear this to you on the faith I own
Tell me your grief before your man comes down,
Come hasten now and go your way anon "
"My dearest love said she, " O my Dan John,
Right glad I were this counsel for to hide
But it must out I can't it more abide
To me my husband is the poorest man
That ever was, since first the world began
But since I am a wife becomes not me
To tell a living soul our privity,
Either abed or in some other place,
God guard that I should tell it of His grace!
For wife must never talk of her husband
Save to his honour as I understand
But now to you thus much I can and shall
So help me God he is not worth at all
In any wise the value of a fly
But yet this grieves me most—he's niggardly
And well you know that women naturally
Desire six things and even so do I
For women all would have their husbands be
Hardy and wise and rich and therewith free,
Obedient to the wife and fresh in bed
But by that very Lord Who for us bled
Though in his honour myself to array
On Sunday next, I must yet go and pay
A hundred francs or else be but forlorn
Yet would I rather never have been born
Than have a scandal or disgrace say I
And if my husband such a thing should spy
I were but lost and therefore do I pray
Lend me this sum or else I perish yea!
Dan John I say lend me these hundred francs,
By gad I will not fail to give you thanks
If only you will do the thing I pray
For on a certain day I will repay
And give to you what *pleasure and service*
I can give ave just as you may devise
And if I don't God take on me vengeance
As foul as once on Ganelon of France!
This gentle monk replied as you shall hear
" Now truthfully my own sweet lady dear
I have said he on you so great a ruth
That I do swear and promise you in truth
That when your husband *goes to Flanders there*
I will deliver you from all this care
For I will bring to you a hundred francs
And with that word he caught her by the flanks
And hugged her to him hard and kissed her oft
" Go now your way he said, all still and soft,
And let us dine as soon as *ever we may*
For by my dial it's the prime of day
Go now and be as true as I shall be
" Now all else God forbid sir then said she
And in she went as jolly as a pie
And bade the *cooks* that they to kitchen hie
So that her men might dine, and that anon

To have the more cause of aqueintaunce
Of yow, which I have loved specially
Abov *en alle wommen sikerly;*
Thus swere I yow on my professioun
Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon "
"My dere love," quod she, "o my daun John,
Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
But out it moot, I may namore abyde
Myn housbond is to me the worste man
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.
But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
To tellen no wight of our pravetee,
Neither a bedde, ne in non other place,
God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!
A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
But al honour, as I can understonde,
Save un to yow thus muche I tellen shal,
As help me god, he is noght worth at al
In no degree the value of a flye
But yet me greveth most his nigardye,
And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly
Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I
They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be
Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther to free,
And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde
But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,
For his honour, my-self for to arraye,
A Sonday next, I moste nedes paye
An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn
Yet were me lever that I were unborn
Than me were doon a sclaundre or vileinye,
And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,
I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye
Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye
Daun John, I seye, lene me this hundred frankes,
Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thankes,
If that yow list to doon that I yow praye
For at a certein day I wol yow paye,
And doon to yow what *plesance and servyce*
That I may doon, right as yow list devyse
And but I do, god take on me vengeance
As foul as ever had Geniloun of France! "
Thus gentil monk answerde in this manere,
"Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,
I have," quod he, "on yow so greet a routhe,
That I yow swere and plighte yow my trouthe,
That whan your *housbond is to Flaundres fare,*
I wol delivere yow out of this care,
For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes "
And with that word he caughte hir by the flankes,
And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir ofte
"Goth now your wey," quod he, "al stille and softe,
And lat us *dyne* as sone as that ye may,
For by my chilindre it is pryme of day
Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be "
"Now, elles god forbede, sire," quod she,
And forth she gooth, as jolif as a pye,
And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye,
So that men mighte dyne, and that anon

Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,
And knokketh at his countour boldely
'*Qui la?*' quod he
'Peter![1] it am I,"
Quod she, "what, sire, how longe wol ye faste?

And therfor have I greet necessitee
Up-on this queinte world t'avyse me,
For evermore we mote stonde in drede

And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette,
But hastily a messe was ther seyd,
And spedily the tables were y leyd,

Up to her husband is this wife then gone,
And knocked upon his counting room boldy
'*Qui est là?*' asked he
Peter![1] It is I '

The curious businesses that merchants have

And down he went no longer tarrying but
Right hastily a Mass for them was said

For certain cattle I must buy to do
The stocking of a little place of ours
So help me God I would that it were yours!
I will not fail you come next settling day
Not for a thousand francs a mile away
But let this thing be secret pray for I
Even tonight must go these beasts to buy
And farewell now my own good cousin dear
And many thanks for entertainment here
  This noble merchant civilly anon
Answered and said O cousin mine Dan John,
Now surely this is but a small request
My gold is yours and aye at your behest
And not gold only no but all my ware
Take what you like God shield that you should
  spare
  There's but one thing which you know well enow
Of traders for their money is their plow
We may on credit trade while we've a name
But to be goldless is to lose the game
Pay it again when you are at your ease
In all I can full fain am I to please
  These hundred francs he went and got anon
And privately he gave them to Dan John
No one in all the world knew of this loan
Saving this merchant and Dan John alone
They drink and talk and walk awhile and
  play
Until Dan John sets out for his abbey
  The morrow came and forth this merchant
    rides
Toward Flanders and his apprentice guides
Until he came to Bruges all happily
Now went this merchant fast and busily
About his trade and bought and borrowed gold
He neither played at dice nor danced I'm told
But like a merchant briefly here to tell
He led his life and there I let him dwell
  On the first Sunday after he was gone
To Saint Denis is come again Dan John
With face and tonsure shining from a shave
In all the house was not so small a knave
Nor any other but was right glad then
Because my lord Dan John was come again
And coming briefly to the point anon
This lovely wife agreed with her Dan John
That for these hundred francs he should all night
Have her within his arms and bolt upright
And this agreement was performed in bed
In mirth all night a busy life they led
Till it was dawn when Dan John went his way
Bidding the household Farewell! and
  'Good-day!
For none of them nor any in the town
Had of Dan John the least suspicion shown
So forth he rode home to his own abbey
Or where he wished no more of him I say
  This merchant when all ended was the fair
To Saint Denis made ready to repair
And with his wife he feasted and made cheer
And told her that since goods were very dear,
He needs must get more cash at his command

For certein beestes that I moste beye,
To store with a place that is oures
God help me so, I wolde it were youres!
I shal nat faille surely of my day,
Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way
But lat this thing be secree, I yow preye,
For yet to-night thise beestes moot I beye,
And fare now wel, myn owene cosin dere,
Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere"
  This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosin myn, daun John,
Now sikerly this is a smal requeste,
My gold is youres, whan that it yow leste.
And nat only my gold, but my chaffare,
Take what yow list, god shilde that ye
  spare
  But o thing is, ye knowe it wel ynogh,
Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir plogh
We may creaunce whyl we have a name,
But goldlees for to be, it is no game
Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese,
After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese"
  Thise hundred frankes he fette forth anon,
And prively he took hem to daun John
No wight in al this world wiste of this lone,
Savinge this marchant and daun John allone
They drinke, and speke, and rome a whyle and
  pleye,
Til that daun John rydeth to his abbeye
  The morwe cam, and forth this marchant
    rydeth
To Flaundres ward his prentis wel him gydeth,
Til he cam in to Brugges merily
Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaunceth
He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daunceth,
But as a marchant, shortly for to telle,
He let his lyf and there I lete him dwelle
  The Sonday next this Marchant was agon,
To Seint Denys y-comen is daun John,
With crowne and berd al fresh and newe y shave
In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave,
Ne wo wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,
For that my lord daun John was come agayn.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wyf accorded with daun John,
That for thise hundred frankes he sholde al night
Have hir in his armes bolt upright,
And this acord parfourned was in dede
In murthe al night a bisy lyf they lede
Til it was day, that daun John wente his way,
And bad the meynee fare-wel, have
  good day!'
For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
Hath of daun John right no suspecioun
And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
Or where him list, namore of him I seye
  This marchant, whan that ended was the faire,
To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
And with his wyf he maketh feste and chere,
And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,
That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce

For he was bounde in a reconissaunce
To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon
For which this marchant is to Paris gon,
To borwe of certein frendes that he hadde
A certein frankes, and somme with him he ladde
And whan that he was come in to the toun,
For greet chertee and greet affeccioun,
Un to daun John he gooth him first, to pleye,
Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen him of his chaffare,
As freendes doon whan they ben met y fere
Daun John him maketh feste and mery chere,
And he him tolde agayn ful specially,
How he hadde wel y boght and graciously,
Thanked be god, al hool his marchandyse
Save that he moste in alle maner wyse,
Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste
And thanne he sholde been in joye and reste.
Daun John answerde, ' certes, I am fayn
That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse
Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat misse,
For ye so kindely this other day
Lente me gold and as I can and may,
I thanke yow, by god and by seint Jame!
But nathelees I took un to our dame,
Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn

Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
The somme of gold, and gat of hem his bond,
And hoom he gooth, mery as a papejay
For wel he knew he stood in swich array,
That nedes moste he winne in that viage
A thousand frankes above al his costage
His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate,
And al that night in mirthe they bisette
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough
Namore," quod she, ' by god, ye have
y nough! '
And wantounly agayn with him she pleyde,
Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,
' By god, quod he, ' I am a litel wrooth
With yow, my wyf, al thogh it be me looth
And woot ye why? by god as that I gesse,
That ye han maad a maner straungenesse
Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun John
Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
By redy tokene, and heeld him yvel apayed,

For he was bound by his own note of hand

And when he d come at length into the town
Out of great friendship never yet outgrown
Unto Dan John he went first there to play

How he had purchased well and luckily—
Thanks be to God!—all of his merchandise
Save that he must nor fail in any wise
Obtain a loan at least it would be best
And then he d have some time for joy and rest
Dan John replied No gladness do I feign
That sound in health you are come home again
And if I were but rich as I have bliss
These twenty thousand crowns you should not miss

By certain tokens that I gave to her
Now by your leave I must get up and stir,
Our abbot will be leaving town anon

Now home he goes as merry as a jay
For well he knew he stood in such array
That now he needs must make with nothing lost,
A thousand francs above his total cost
His wife all ready met him at the gate
As she was wont though he came soon or late
And all that night with pleasure did they pet
For he was rich and cleanly out of debt
When it was day this merchant did embrace
His wife anew and kissed her on her face
And up he goes and makes it rather tough
No more cried she by God you ve had
enough!

In cash he was put out I am afraid

Because I spoke to him of loans by chance
At least I judged so by his countenance
Nevertheless, by God our Heavenly King,
I never thought to ask him such a thing
I pray you wife, never again do so,
But always tell me, ere away I go,
If any debtor has in my absence,
Repaid to you lest through your negligence
I might demand a sum already paid
This wife was not astounded nor afraid,
But boldly she spoke up and that anon
Marry I challenge that false monk Dan John!
I kept of all his coins, not one to tell
He brought me certain gold— that know I well!
What! Ill success upon his friar's snout!
For God knows that I thought, with never a doubt
That he had given it me because of you,
To advance thus my honour and yours too,
In cousinhood and for the merry cheer
That he has found so many a time right here
But since I see our peace is thus disjoint,
I ll answer you but briefly to the point
You have far slacker debtors than am I!
For I will pay you well and readily
From day to day, and if it be I fail,
I am your wife tally it on my tail
And I will pay as soon as ever I may
For by my truth I have on new array,
And not on rubbish spent it every sou
And since so well I ve spent it all for you,
All for your honour for God s sake I say,
Do not be angry but let s laugh and play
My jolly body s yours in pledge she said
By God I will not pay you save in bed!
Forgive me then my own sweet husband dear,
Let us be happy now—turn over here!
This merchant saw there was no remedy
And thought he chiding were but great folly
Since that the thing might not amended be
Now wife' he said, I do forgive you see
But on your life don t run so far at large
Conserve our wealth hereafter so I charge
Thus ends my tale and may the good God send
Tales fair enough until our lives shall end! Amen

For that I to him spak of chevisaunce,
Me semed so, as by his contenaunce
But nathelees, by god our hevene king,
I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing
I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so;
Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in myn absence
Y payed thee, lest, thurgh thy necligence,
I mighte him axe a thing that he hath payed"
This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed,
But boldely she seyde, and that anon
"Marie, I defye the false monk, daun John!
I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel,
He took me certein gold, that woot I weel!
What! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute!
For, god it woot, I wende, withouten doute,
That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,
To doon ther-with myn honour and my prow,
For cosinage, and eek for bele chere
That he hath had ful ofte tymes here
But sith I see I stonde in this disjoint,
I wol answere yow shortly, to the point
Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!
For I wol paye yow wel and redily
Fro day to day, and, if so be I faille,
I am your wyf, score it up-on my taille,
And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may
For by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
And nat on wast, bistowed every deel
And for I have bistowed it so weel
For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye,
As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye
Ye shal my joly body have to wedde,
By god, I wol nat paye yow but a bedde
Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere,
Turne hiderward and maketh bettre chere"
This marchant saugh ther was no remedye,
And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,
Sith that the thing may nat amended be
"Now, wyf," he seyde, "and I foryeve it thee,
But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large,
Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in charge"
Thus endeth now my tale, and god us sende
Taling ynough, un to our lyves ende, Amen

HERE ENDETH THE SHIPMAN'S TALE

THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE

BEHOLD THE MERRY WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE SHIPMAN AND TO THE LADY PRIORESS

'WELL said by *corpus dominus*' said our host
'Now long time may you sail along the coast
Sir gentle master gentle mariner!
God give this monk a thousand years bitter!
Aha comrades, beware of such a jape!
The monk put into that man s hood an ape
And in the wife's too by Saint Augustine!
Invite no more monks to your house or inn
But let that pass, and let us look about

'WEL seyd, by *corpus dominus*," quod our hoste,
'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil mariner!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a jape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape,
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un to your in
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,

Who shal now telle first, of al this route,
Another tale,'
and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
' My lady Prioresse, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?"
' Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here

To see who shall be next of all this rout
To tell a tale
And after that he said,
As courteously as it had been a maid
My lady prioress and by your leave

Now will you please vouchsafe it lady dear?
Gladly said she and spoke as you shall hear

HERE IT ENDETH

THE PRIORESS'S TALE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PRIORESS S TALE

Domine, dominus noster

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde y sprad—quod she —
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge

bote —

Wherefore in praise as best I can or may,
Of Thee and of that pure white Lily flower
Who bore Thee and is yet a maid alway
I tell a tale as best is in my power
Not that I may increase Her heavenly dower
For She Herself is honour and the one
From Whom spring wealth and goodness next Her Son

O moder mayde! o mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest doun fro the deitee
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in th alighte,
Of whos vertu whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience,
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!

O Mother Maid! O Maiden Mother free!
O bush unburnt burning in Moses sight,
Who ravished so the Soul of Deity
With Thy meekness the Spirit of the Light
That H s virtue which was Thy soul s delight
Conceived in Thee the Father s wise Essence
Help me to speak now with all reverence!

Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu and thy grete humilitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science,
For som tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us un to thy sone so dere

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse
That can unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye

HERE BEGINNETH THE PRIORESS'S TALE

In Asia, in a city rich and great
There was a Jewry set amidst the town,
Established by a rich lord of the state
For usury and gain of ill renown,
Hateful to Christ and those who are His own,
And through that street a man might ride or wend,
For it was free and open at each end

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
Amonges Cristen folk, a Jewerye,
Sustened by a lord of that contree
For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
For it was free, and open at either ende

A little school for Christian folk there stood,
Down at the farther end, in which there were
A many children born of Christian blood
Who learned in that same school, year after year,
Such teachings as with men were current there,
Which is to say, to sing well and to read,
As children do of whatsoever creed

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an heep, y-comen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
As smale children doon in hir childhede

Among these children was a widow's son,
A little choir boy, seven years of age
Who went to school as days passed one by one,
And who, whenever saw he the image
Of Jesus' Mother, it was his usage,
As he'd been taught, to kneel down there and say
Ave Maria, ere he went his way

Among thise children was a widwes sone,
A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eek also, wher-as he saugh th'image
Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.

Thus had this widow her small son well taught
Our Blessed Lady Jesus Mother dear,
To worship always, and he never forgot,
For simple child learns easily and clear
But ever when I muse on matters here,
Saint Nicholas stands aye in my presence,
For he, when young, did do Christ reverence.

Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worshipe ay, and he forgat it naught,
For sely child wol alday sone lere,
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence

This little child his little lesson learning
Sat at his primer in the school and there,
While boys were taught the antiphons kept turning
And heard the *Alma redemptoris* fair,
And drew as near as ever he did dare,
Marking the words, remembering every note,
Until the first verse he could sing by rote

This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
As children lerned hir antiphoner,
He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner,
And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote

He knew not what this Latin meant to say,
Being so young and of such tender age,
But once a young school comrade did he pray
To expound to him the song in his language,
Or tell him why the song was in usage,
Asking the boy the meaning of the song,
On his bare knees he begged him well and long

Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
For he so yong and tendre was of age,
But on a day his felaw gan he preye
T'expounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage,
This preyde he him to construe and declare
Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.

His fellow was an older lad than he,
And answered thus "This song, as I've heard say,
Was made to praise Our Blessed Lady free,
Her to salute and ever Her to pray
To be our help when comes our dying day
I can expound to you only so far,
I've learned the song, I know but small grammar"

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerde him thus "this song, I have herd seye,
Was maked of our blisful lady free,
Hir to salue, and eek hir for to preye
To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere,
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere."

"And is this song made in all reverence
Of Jesus' Mother?" asked this innocent,
"Now truly I will work with diligence
To learn it all ere Christmas sacrament,

"And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?" seyde this innocent,
"Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemasse is went;

Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure "

His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note,
Twyes a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, "O Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?"

Fro thennes forth the Jewes han conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace,

I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe

And namely ther th'onour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.

"O martir, souded to virginitee,

[illegible] she gan so fer espye
That he last seyn was in the Jewerye

With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,

Though for my primer I take punishment
And though I'm beaten thrice within the hour,
Yet will I learn it by Our Lady's power!"

As schoolward went he and as homeward went,
On Jesus Mother was his fixed intent

As I have said, as through the Jewry went
This little school boy, out the song would ring,

In your despite and doing such offense
Against the teachings that you reverence?"

From that time forth the Jewish folk conspired
Out of the world this innocent to chase,

And chiefly when God's honour vengeance needs,
The blood cries out upon your cursed deeds

she—
In Patmos wrote, saying that they are gone
Before the Lamb, singing a song that's new,
And virgins all, who never woman knew "

With mother's pity in her breast enclosed
She ran, as she were half out of her mind,

To every place where it might be supposed,
In likelihood that she her son should find,
And ever on Christ's Mother meek and kind
She called until, at last, Our Lady wrought
That amongst the cursed Jews the widow sought.

She asked and she implored, all piteously,
Of every Jew who dwelt in that foul place,
To tell her where her little child could be
They answered "Nay" But Jesus, of His grace,
Put in her mind, within a little space,
That after him in that same spot she cried
Where he'd been cast in pit, or near beside

O Thou great God Who innocents hast called
To give Thee praise now shown is Thy great might!
This gem of chastity, this emerald
Of martyrdom the ruby clear and bright,
Began, though slain and hidden there from sight,
The *Alma redemptoris* loud to sing
So clear that all the neighbourhood did ring

The Christian folk that through the ghetto went
Came running for the wonder of this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sent,
He also came without long tarrying,
And gave Christ thanks Who is of Heaven King,
And too, His Mother, honour of mankind,
And after that the Jews there did he bind

This child with piteous lamentation, then
Was taken up, singing his song alway,
And honoured by a great concourse of men,
Carried within an abbey near, that day
Swooning his mother by the black bier lay,
Nor easily could people who were there
This second Rachel carry from the bier

With torture and with shameful death, each one,
The provost did these cursed Hebrews serve
Who of the murder knew, and that anon,
From justice to the villains he'd not swerve
Evil shall have what evil does deserve
And therefore, with wild horses, did he draw,
And after hang, their bodies, all by law

Upon the bier lay this poor innocent
Before the altar while the mass did last,
And after that the abbot and monks went
About the coffin for to close it fast,
But when the holy water they did cast,
Then spoke the child, at touch of holy water,
And sang 'O *Alma redemptoris mater!*'

This abbot, who was a right holy man,
As all monks are, or as they ought to be,
The dead young boy to conjure then began,
Saying 'O dear child I do beg of thee,
By virtue of the Holy Trinity,
Tell me how it can be that thou dost sing
After thy throat is cut, to all seeming?'

To every place wher she hath supposed
By lyklihede hir litel child to finde,
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
Among the cursed Jewes she him soghte

She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
To every Jew that dwelte in thilke place,
To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
They seyde, "nay", but Jesu, of his grace,
Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.

O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
He "*Alma redemptoris*" gan to singe
So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
And hastily they for the provost sente,
He cam anon with-outen tarying,
And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
And after that, the Jewes leet he binde

This child with pitous lamentacioun
Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
And with honour of greet processioun
They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
His moder swowning by the bere lay,
Unnethe might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.

With torment and with shamful deth echon
This provost dooth thise Jewes for to sterve
That of this mordre wiste, and that anon,
He nolde no swich cursednesse observe
Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve
Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe

Up-on his bere ay lyth this innocent
Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
And after that, the abbot with his covent
Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste,
And whan they holy water on him caste,
Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water,
And song—"O *Alma redemptoris mater!*"

This abbot, which that was an holy man
As monkes been, or elles oghten be,
This yonge child to conjure he bigan,
And seyde, "o dere child, I halse thee,
In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?"

"My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,"
Seyde this child, "and, as by wey of kinde,
I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
[illegible]

[illegible]

Wills that His glory last in human mind,
Thus for the honour of His Mother dear,
Still may I sing '*O Alma*' loud and clear

This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
This antem verraily in my deyinge,
As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge.

"This well of mercy, Jesus' Mother sweet,
I always loved, after my poor knowing,
And when came time that I my death must meet,
She came to me and bade me only sing
This anthem in the pain of my dying,
As you have heard, and after I had sung,
She laid a precious pearl upon my tongue

Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
In honour of that blisful mayden free,
Til fro my tonge of taken is the greyn,
And afterward thus seyde she to me,
'My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
When that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take,
Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake'"

"Wherefore I sing, and sing I must, 'tis plain,
[illegible]

This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
Him tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,
And he yaf up the goost ful softely
And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
His salte teres trikled doun as reyn,
And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde
And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde

The holy monk, this abbot, so say I,
The tongue caught out and took away the grain,
And he gave up the ghost, then, easily,
[illegible]

The covent eek lay on the pavement
Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
And toke awey this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marbul stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete,
Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete

And all the monks lay there on the pavement,
Weeping and praising Jesus' Mother dear,
And after that they rose and forth they went,
[illegible]

O yonge Hugh of Lincoln,[1] slayn also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That, of his mercy, god so merciable
On us his grete mercy multiplye,
For reverence of his moder Marye Amen

O you young Hugh of Lincoln,[1] slain also
By cursed Jews, as is well known to all,
Since it was but a little while ago,
Pray you for us, sinful and weak who call,
That, of His mercy, God will still let fall
Something of grace, and mercy multiply,
For reverence of His Mother dear on high Amen

[1]Referring to a murder that had attracted much attention in England during the reign of Henry III

HERE IS ENDED THE PRIORESS'S TALE

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS

BEHOLD THE MERRY WORDS OF THE HOST TO CHAUCER

WHAN seyd was al this miracle, every man
As sobre was, that wonder was to see,
Til that our hoste japen tho bigan,
And than at erst he loked up-on me,
And seyde thus, "what man artow?" quod he,

WHEN told was all this miracle, every man
So sober fell 'twas wonderful to see,
Until our host in jesting wise began,
And for the first time did he glance at me,
Saying, "What man are you?"—'twas thus quoth he—

"You look as if you tried to find a hare,
For always on the ground I see you stare

'Come near me then and look up merrily
Now make way sirs and let this man have place,
He in the waist is shaped as well as I
This were a puppet in an arm's embrace
For any woman small and fair of face
Why he seems absent by his countenance
And gossips with no one for dalliance

Since other folk have spoken it's your turn
Tell us a *mirthful tale and that anon*
Mine host said I don't be, I beg too stern
For of good tales indeed sir have I none
Save a long rhyme I learned in years agone
'Well that is good said he 'now shall we hear
It seems to me a thing to bring us cheer

"Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare

Approche neer, and loke up merily
Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place,
He in the waast is shape as well as I,
This were a popet in an arm t'enbrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face
He semeth elvish by his contenaunce,
For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce

Sey now somwhat, sin other folk han sayd,
Tel us a tale of *mirthe, and that anoon*",—
"Hoste," quod I, "ne beth nat yvel apayd,
For other tale certes can I noon,
But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon "
"Ye, that is good,' quod he, "now shul we here
Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere "

HERE IT ENDETH

SIR THOPAS

HERE BEGINNETH CHAUCER'S TALE OF THOPAS

The First Fit

Listen lords with good intent
I truly will a tale present
  Of mirth and of solace
All of a knight was fair and gent[1]
In battle and in tournament
  His name was Sir Thopas

Born he was in a far country
In Flanders, all beyond the sea
  And Poperinghe the place
His father was a man full free
And lord he was of that country
  As chanced to be *God's grace*

Sir Thopas was a doughty swain
White was his brow *as paindemaine* [2]
  His lips red as a rose
His cheeks were like poppies in grain
And I tell you and will maintain
  He had a comely nose

His hair and beard were like saffron
And to his girdle reached adown
  His shoes were of cordwain [3]
From Bruges were come his long hose brown
His rich robe was of ciclatoun[4]—
  And cost full many a jane [5]

Well could he hunt the dim wild deer
And ride a hawking by river,
  With grey goshawk on hand
Therewith he was a good archer

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
And I wol telle verrayment
  Of mirthe and of solas,
Al of a knyght was fair and gent[1]
In bataille and in tourneyment,
  His name was sir Thopas

Y born he was in fer contree,
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
  At Popering, in the place,
His fader was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
  As it was *goddes grace*

Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,
Whyt was *his face as payndemayn*,[2]
  His lippes rede as rose,
His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
And I yow telle in good certayn,
  He hadde a semely nose

His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,
That to his girdel raughte adoun,
  His shoon of Cordewane [3]
Of Brugges were his hosen broun,
His robe was of ciclatoun,[4]
  That coste many a jane [5]

He coude hunte at wilde deer,
And ryde an hauking for riveer,
  With grey goshauk on honde,
Ther to he was a good archeer,

[1]Of gentle birth [2]White bread of the finest quality [3]Cordovan leather.
[4]A costly kind of thin cloth
[5]A *Genoese coin current in England in the 14th century*

Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
  Ther any ram[1] shal stonde

Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
They moorne for him, paramour,
  Whan hem were bet to slepe,
But he was chast and no lechour,
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
  That bereth the rede hepe [2]

And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
  Sir Thopas wolde out ryde,
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegay,
  A long swerd by his syde

He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best,
  Ye, bothe bukke and hare,
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde almest
  Bitid a sory care

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The lycorys and cetewale,
  And many a clowe-gilofre,
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
  Or for to leye in cofre

The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhauk and the papejay,
  That joye it was to here,
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray
  She sang ful loude and clere

Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
  And priked as he were wood
His faire stede in his prikinge
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,
  His sydes were al blood.

Sir Thopas *eek so wery was*
For prikinge on the softe gras,
  So fiers was his corage,
That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his stede som solas,
  And yaf him good forage

"O seinte Marie, *ben'cite!*
What eyleth this love at me
  To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
  And slepe under my gore [3]

"An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,[4]
For in this world no womman is

At wrestling was there none his peer
  Where any ram[1] did stand

Full many a maiden, bright in bower,
Did long for him for paramour
  When they were best asleep,
But chaste he was, no lecher sure,
And sweet as is the bramble flower
  That bears a rich red hepe [2]

And so befell, upon a day,
In truth, as I can tell or may,
  Sir Thopas out would ride,
He mounted on his stallion grey,
And held in hand a lance I say,
  With longsword by his side

He spurred throughout a fair forest
Wherein was many a dim wild beast,
  Aye both the buck and hare,
And as he spurred on, north and east,
I tell you now he had in breast,
  A melancholy care

There herbs *were* springing, great and small,
The licorice blue and white setwall,
  And many a gillyflower,
And nutmeg for to put in ale,
All whether it be fresh or stale,
  Or lay in chest in bower

The birds they *sang* upon that day,
The sparrow hawk and popinjay,
  Till it was joy to hear,
The missel thrush he made his lay,
The tender stockdove on the spray
  She sang full loud and clear

Sir Thopas fell to love longing
All when he heard the throstle sing,
  And spurred as madman would
His stallion fair, for this spurring
Did sweat till men his coat might wring,
  His two flanks were all blood

Sir Thopas grown so weary was
With spurring on the yielding grass,
  So fierce had been his speed
That down he laid him in that place
To give the stallion some solace
  And let him find his feed

'O holy Mary *ben cite!*
What ails my heart that love in me
  Should bind me now so sore?
For dreamed I all last night pardie,
An elf-queen shall my darling be,
  And sleep beneath my gore [3]

"An elf queen will I love, ywis,[4]
For in this world no woman is

[1]The usual prize in wrestling [2]Hip [3]The gore of his garment [4]Truly, certainly

Worthy to be my make
In town,
All other women I forsake
And to an elf queen I'll betake
Myself by dale and down!

Into his saddle he climbed anon
And spurred then over stile and stone,
An elf queen for to see
Till he so far had ridden on
He found a secret place and won
The land of Faery
So wild
For in that country was there none
That unto him dared come not one,
Not either wife or child

Until there came a great giant

.

For here the queen of Faery
With harp and pipe and harmony
Is dwelling in this place

The Childe said As I hope to thrive,
We'll fight the morn as I'm alive,
When I have my armour
For well I hope and *par ma fay*
That thou shalt by this lance well pay,
And suffer strokes full sore
Thy maw
Shall I pierce through and if I may
Ere it be fully prime of day
Thou'lt die of wounds most raw

Sir Thopas drew aback full fast
This giant at him stones did cast
Out of a fell staff sling
But soon escaped was Childe Thopas,
And all it was by God's own grace,
And by his brave bearing

And listen yet lords to my tale
Merrier than the nightingale
Whispered to all and some
How Sir Thopas with pride grown pale,
Hard spurring over hill and dale,
Came back to his own home

His merry men commanded he
To make for him both game and glee
For needs now must he fight
With a great giant of heads three,
For love in the society
Of one who shone full bright

Do come' he said my minstrels all

Worthy to be my make
In toune,
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune!"

In-to his sadel he clamb anoon,
And priketh over style and stoon
An elf queen for t'espye,
Til he so longe had riden and goon
That he fond, in a privee woon,
The contree of Fairye [13,731]
So wilde, [13,734]
For in that contree was ther noon
That to him dorste ryde or goon,
Neither wyf ne childe

Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
His name was sir Olifaunt,[1]
A perilous man of dede,
He seyde, "child, by Termagaunt,
But if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede
With mace
Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
With harpe and pype and simphonye
Dwelling in this place"

The child seyde, "al-so mote I thee,
Tomorwe wol I mete thee
Whan I have myn armoure,
And yet I hope, par ma fay,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abyen it ful soure,
Thy mawe
Shal I percen, if I may,
Er it be fully pryme of day,
For heer thou shalt be slawe"

Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste,
This geaunt at him stones caste
Out of a fel staf-slinge,
But faire escapeth child Thopas,
And al it was thurgh goddes gras,
And thurgh his fair beringe

Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol yow roune
How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
Priking over hil and dale,
Is come agayn to toune

His merie men comanded he
To make him bothe game and glee,
For nedes moste he fighte
With a geaunt with hevedes three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of oon that shoon ful brighte

"Do come," he seyde, "my minstrales,

[1] *An old form of elephant*

And gestours, for to tellen tales
  Anon in myn arminge,
Of romances that been royales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
  And eek of love lykinge."

They fette him first the swete wyn,
And mede eek in a maselyn,[1]
  And royal spicerye
Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys and eek comyn,
  With sugre that is so trye.

He dide next his whyte lere
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere
  A breech and eek a sherte,
And next his sherte an aketoun,[2]
And over that an habergeoun[3]
  For percinge of his herte,

And over that a fyn hauberk,[4]
Was al y wroght of Jewes werk,
  Ful strong it was of plate,
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily flour
  In which he wol debate.

His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther in was a bores heed,
  A charbocle bisyde,
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that the geaunt shal be deed,
  Bityde what bityde!

His jambeux[5] were of quirboilly,[6]
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
  His helm of laton[7] bright,
His sadel was of rewel boon,[8]
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
  Or as the mone light.

His spere was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
  The heed ful sharpe y grounde,
His stede was al dappel gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way
  Ful softely and rounde
              In londe.
Lo lordes myne, heer is a fit![9]
If ye wol any more of it,
  To telle it wol I fonde.

And jesters tell me tales in hall
  Anon in mine arming,
Of old romances right royal,
Of pope and king and cardinal,
  And even of love liking.

They brought him first the sweet sweet wine
And mead within a maselyn,[1]
  And royal spicery
Of gingerbread that was full fine
Cumin and licorice I opine
  And sugar so dainty.

He drew on next his white skin clear
Of finest linen clean and sheer
  His breeches and a shirt
And next the shirt a stuffed acton,[2]
And over that a habergeon[3]
  'Gainst piercing of his heart

And over that a fine hauberk[4]
That was wrought all of Jewish work
  And reinforced with plate
And over that his coat-of-arms
As white as lily flower that charms
  Wherein he will debate.

His shield was all of gold so red
And thereon was a wild boar's head
  A carbuncle beside
And now he swore by ale and bread
That soon this giant shall be dead
  Betide what may betide!

His jambeaux[5] were of cuir bouilli,[6]
His sword sheath was of ivory
  His helm of latten[7] bright
His saddle was of rewel bone,[8]
And as the sun his bridle shone
  Or as the full moonlight

His spear was of fine cypress wood
That boded war, not brotherhood
  The head full sharply ground
His steed was all a dapple grey
Whose gait was ambling on the way
  Full easily and round
              In land
Behold my lords here is a fit![9]
If you'll have any more of it
  You have but to command

The Second Fit

Now hold your mouth *par charitee*,
Bothe knight and lady free,
  And herkneth to my spelle
Of bataille and of chivalry
And of ladyes love-drury.[10]
  Anon I wol yow telle

Now hold your peace *par charitee*
Both knight and lady fair and free,
  And hearken to my spell
Of battle and of chivalry
And all of ladies' love-drury[10]
  Anon I will you tell

[1] A maple bowl. [2] A quilted jacket [3] A short coat of mail. [4] A long coat of mail [5] Leg armour [6] Hardened leather [7] A brass-like alloy [8] Probably whale or walrus ivory [9] A part of a ballad [10] Love, passion.

Romances men recount of price,
Of King Horn and of Hypotis
  Of Bevis and Sir Guy,
Of Sir Libeaux and Plain d'Amour,
But Sir Thopas is flower sure
  Of regal chivalry

Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
  Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour,
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
  Of royal chivalry

His good horse all he then bestrode
And forth upon his way he rode
  Like spark out of a brand
Upon his crest he bore a tower
Wherein was thrust a lily flower
  God grant he may withstand!

His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
  As sparkle out of the bronde,
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily flour,
  God shilde his cors fro shonde!

He was a knight adventurous
Wherefore he'd sleep within no house,
  But lay down in his hood
His pillow was his helmet bright
And by him browsed his steed all night
  On forage fine and good

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He nolde slepen in non hous,
  But liggen in his hode,
His brighte helm was his wonger,
And by him baiteth his dextrer
  Of herbes fyne and gode

Himself drank water of the well
As did the knight Sir Percival
  So worthy in his weeds
Till on a day

Him self drank water of the wel,
As did the knight sir Percivel,
  So worthy under wede,
Til on a day——

HERE THE HOST STINTETH CHAUCER OF HIS TALE OF THOPAS

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS

No more of this for God's high dignity!
Exclaimed our host For you sir do make me

In telling tales more than another man
Since I have told the best rhyme that I can?
  By God! cried he now plainly in a word
Your dirty rhyming is not worth a turd
You do naught else but waste and fritter time
Sir in one word you shall no longer rhyme
Let's see if you can use the country verse
Or tell a tale in prose—you might do worse—
Wherein there's mirth or doctrine good and plain
  'Gladly said I by God's sweet tears and pain,
I will relate a little thing in prose
That ought to please you or so I suppose
For surely else you're contumelious

"No more of this, for goddes dignitee,"
Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me
So wery of thy verray lewednesse
That, also wisly god my soule blesse,
Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche,
Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!
This may wel be rym dogerel," quod he
  'Why so?' quod I, "why wiltow lette me
More of my tale than another man,
Sin that it is the beste rym I can?'
  "By god," quod he, 'for pleynly, at a word,
Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord!
Thou doost nought elles but despendest tyme,
Sir, at o word, thou shalt no lenger ryme
Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in geste,
Or telle in prose somwhat at the leste
In which ther be some mirthe or som doctryne"
  'Gladly," quod I, by goddes swete pyne.
I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose,
Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told som tyme in sondry wyse
Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse
As thus, ye woot that every evangelist,
That telleth us the peyne of Jesu Crist,
Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw dooth,
But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,
And alle acorden as in hir sentence,
Al be ther in hir telling difference

For somme of hem seyn more, and somme lesse,
When they his pitous passioun expresse,
I mene of Mark [and] Mathew, Luk and John,
But doutelees hir sentence is al oon
Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,
If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,
As thus, thogh that I telle som what more
Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
Comprehended in this litel tretis here,
To enforce with the th'effect of my matere,
And thogh I nat the same wordes seye
As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye,
Blameth me nat, for, as in my sentence,
Ye shul not fynden moche difference
Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte
After the which this mery tale I wryte
And therfor herkneth what that I shal seye,
And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye"

For some of them say more and some say less
When they His piteous passion would express
I mean now Mark and Matthew Luke and John,
Yet without doubt, their meaning is all one
And therefore, masters all, I do beseech,
If you should think I vary in my speech
As thus That I do quote you somewhat more
Of proverbs than you ve ever heard before,

HERE IT ENDETH

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS

HERE BEGINNETH CHAUCER'S TALE OF MELIBEUS

1 A YONG man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bigat up-on his wyf that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie

2 Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went in to the feeldes him to pleye His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y shette Three of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes been entred, and

wenten awey

a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepen in the deeth of hir child, til she have wept hir fille, as for

and escape And al were it so that she right now

A YOUNG man named Melibeus mighty and rich begot on Prudence his wife a daughter who was called Sophie

having spied out the state of things set ladders to the wall of the house and entered therein by a window and they beat the wife and wounded the daughter with five dangerous wounds in five different places, that is to say in her feet in her hands in her ears in her nose and in her mouth and they left her for dead and went away

When Melibeus returned to his house and saw all this mischief he like a madman rending his clothes,

husband to weep and cry for a time and when she saw her opportunity she spoke to him 'Alas my lord! said she Why do you allow yourself to act like a fool? For truly it becomes not a wise man to show such sorrow Your daughter, by the grace of God shall be healed and will recover And were she dead even now you ought not, for this to destroy yourself Seneca says The wise man will not take

too sorrowfully to heart the death of his children, but will suffer it with patience, just as he awaits the death of his own body'"

Melibeus answered, saying "What man should cease his weeping who has so great a cause to weep? Jesus Christ Our Lord Himself wept for the death of His friend Lazarus"

Prudence replied "Indeed, well do I know that moderate weeping is not forbidden to anyone who sorrows, among sorrowing folk

"Remember the patient Job when he

"Call, then," said Prudence, "all of your true friends and those of your kindred who are wise; tell them your trouble and hearken to what the

Then, upon the advice of his wife Prudence, Melibeus called together a great gathering of people

were deed, ye ne oghte nat as for

6 Thus Melibeus answerde anon and seyde, "What man," quod he, "sholde of his weping stinte, that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? Iesu Crist, our lord, him-self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus his freend" Prudence answerde, "Certes, well woot, attempree weping is no-thing defended to him that sorweful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The Apostle Paul un-to the Romayns wryteth, 'man shal rejoyse with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen' But thogh attempree weping be y-graunted, outrageous weping certes is defend

many a man' Salomon seith 'that, right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale

oure lord hath wold, right so it is doon, blessed be the name of our lord'" To thise foreseide thinges answerde Melibeus un-to his wyf Prudence "Alle thy wordes," quod he, "been sothe, and ther-to profitable, but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevo

love, as it happeth ofte Ther comen also ful many subtile flatereres, and wyse advocats lerned in the lawe

9 And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wyse shewed hem his

eth that we do to

bothe, wherefore un-to our art it is nat pertinent

grace of god she shal be hool and sound as sone as is possible " Almost right in the same wyse the

richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power of

heigh matere, by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause, and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe for the

thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save And after that we conseille, that in thyn

there came also a great many subtile flatterers, and there were wise advocates learned in the law

fections And certainly, as to the healing of your daughter, although she is dangerously wounded, we will be so attentive, by day and by night, that, with God s grace, she shall be made sound and whole

Then arose an advocate, a wise man, by leave and advice of others who were wise, and

the ma

heavy

wicked

the gre

same cause, and, too, by reason of the great wealth and power of both parties For all of these reasons it were dangerous indeed to err in this matter Wherefore, Melibeus this is our judgment we counsel you above all

ments, or of securing vengeance, when the delay is both sufficient and reasonable And that was shown, in example, by Our Lord Jesus Christ For when the woman taken in adultery was brought into His presence, in order to learn what He would have them to do with her, though He well knew what He would thereafter answer, yet would He not answer quickly, but deliberated, and He stooped down and wrote twice upon the ground For all these reasons, we ask time in which to deliberate, and thereafter we will counsel you, by the grace of God, as to the most profitable course"

Up started, then, all of the young folk, at once,

Upon this, one of the old wise ones arose, and with his hand commanding silence and attention, he said "Masters, there is many a man to cry 'War, War!' who yet knows but little of the meaning of it War, in the beginning, has so high an entrance, and so wide, that every man may enter when he pleases, and may find war easily But truly, what the end of war shall be is not so easy to know For when a war

words with reasons, then well nigh all the younger folk arose and began to heckle him and to break up his argument, bidding him cut short his remarks For indeed, he that preaches to those who have ears but hear not, makes of himself a nuisance As Jesus son of Sirach says "A tale out of season is as musick in mourning" Which is to say, it avails as much to speak to folk to whom the speech is annoying as to sing before one who weeps And when this wise man understood that he lacked an audience, he sat down again, much confused For Solomon says "When there is none will hear thee, cease to speak" "I see well," said this wise man, "that the proverb says truth, which runs, 'Good counsel is wanting when it is most needed'"

Again, Melibeus had in his council many men who said one thing in his private ear and spoke otherwise in general audience

When Melibeus heard that the greater part of his councillors were agreed on war, straightway he showed himself in accord with them and confirmed

ing be anoyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevinge of jugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable And that shewed our lord Jesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answere, yet ne wolde he nat answere sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseille thee thing that shal be profitable"

12 Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden that, right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe, and with loud voys they cryden, "werre! werre!"

Up roos tho oon of thise olde wyse, and with his hand made contenaunce that men sholde holden hem stille and yeven him audience "Lordinges," quod he, "ther is ful many a man that cryeth 'werre! werre!' that woot ful litel what werre amounteth.

yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. And ther-fore, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun" And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel ny alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for to breken his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes for to abregge For soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth For Jesus Syrak seith that "musik in wepinge is anoyous thing", this is to seyn as muche availleth to speken biforn folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biforn him that wepeth And whan this wyse man saugh that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn For Salomon seith "ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke." "I see wel," quod this wyse man, "that the commune proverbe is sooth, that 'good conseil wanteth whan it is most nede.'"

13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere conseilled him certeyn thing, and conseilled him the contrarie in general audience.

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anoon he consented to hir conseilling, and fully affermed hir sentence. Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoop him for to wreken him on his foos, and to biginne werre, she in ful humble wyse, when

she saugh hir tyme, seide him thise wordes "My lord," quod she, "I yow biseche as hertely as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeveth me audience For Piers Alfonce seith 'who-so that dooth to that other good or harm, haste thee nat to quyten it; for in this wyse thy freend wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger live in drede ' The proverbe seith 'he hasteth wel that wysely can abyde', and in wikked haste is no profit "

that you go not too hastily in this matter, and for your own good give me a hearing For Petrus Alfonsus says 'And if one man do to another any good or [illegible]

14 This Melibee answerde un-to his wyf Prudence "I purpose nat," quod he, "to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns For certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool, this is to seyn, if I, for thy conseilling, wolde chaungen thinges that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse Secoundly I seye, that alle wommen [illegible]

This Melibeus answered Prudence his wife "I purpose not to work by your counsel, for many causes and reasons For truly every man would then take [illegible]

over me the maistrie, and god forbede that it so were For Jesus Syrak seith, 'that if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde ' And Salomon seith 'never in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thyself For bettre it were that thy children aske of thy persone thinges that hem nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children ' And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseilling, certes my conseilling moste som tyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe, and this ne may noght be [For it is writen, that 'the janglerie of wommen can hyden thinges that they witen noght ' Furthermore, the philosophre seith, 'in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men', and for thise resouns I ne ow nat usen thy conseil "

that all women are evil and none good Behold, this have I found (saith the Preacher), counting one by one, to find out the account, which yet my soul seeketh, but I found not one man among a thousand have I found, but a woman among all those have I not fo nd ' And certa nl if I were to be [illegible]

15 Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacience, hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him licence for to speke, and seyde in this wyse "My lord," quod she, "as to your firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered. For I seye, that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged, or elles whan the thing semeth otherweyes than it was biforn. And more-over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne your emprise, and nathelees ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by juste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer ne forsworn For the book seith, that 'the wyse man maketh no lesing whan he turneth his corage to the bettre ' And al be-it so that your emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow lyke For the trouthe of thinges and the profit been rather foun-

When Dame Prudence, very affably and with great patience, had heard all that her husband chose to say, then she asked of him leave to speak, and said "My lord, as to your first reason, surely it may readily be answered For I say that it is no folly to over rule counsel when circumstances are changed or when the cause appears otherwise than at the first And, moreover, I say that though you have sworn and warranted to perform your enterprise, nevertheless, [illegible]

he likes Truly such a crowd is not worthy of honour.

thereafter, for the great worth that is in women, Our Lord Jesus Christ, when He had risen from death

never have found a good woman, surely many another man has found full many a woman to be both good and true Or perchance Solomon's meaning was this that so far as the highest virtue is concerned, he found no such woman, which is to say, that there is no one who has sovereign goodness and worth, save God alone, as He Himself has caused to be recorded in His gospels For there is no creature so good that he is not somehow wanting in the perfection of God, Who is his Maker Your third reason is this You

in order that no man should ever be advised, save by those who had mastery over his person, men could not so often be advised For truly, every man who asks counsel concerning any purpose yet retains his freedom to choose whether he will or will not proceed by that counselling And as to your fourth reason, wherein you say that the chattering of women can hide things of the which they are not aware, as one might say that a woman cannot hide what she knows—sir, these words are only to be understood of women who are both evil and gossipy of which women men say that three things will drive a man out of his own house smoke, and the dripping of rain, and a wicked wife And further, of such women, Solomon says 'It were better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house' And, sir, by your leave, that I am not, for you have often enough tested my ability to

den in fewe folk that been wyse and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clatereth what that him lyketh Soothly swich multitude is nat honeste As to the seconde resoun, where-as ye seyn that 'alle wommen been wikke,' save your grace, certes ye despysen alle wommen in this wyse, and 'he that alle despyseth alle displeseth,' as seith the book And Senek seith that 'who-so wole have sapience, shal no man dispreise, but he shal gladly techen the science that he can, with-outen presumpcioun or pryde And swiche thinges as he nought ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquere of lasse folk than him-self.' And sir, that ther hath been many a good womman, may lightly be preved For certes, sir, our lord Jesu Crist wolde never have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our lord Jesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles And though that Salomon seith, that 'he ne fond never womman good,' it folweth nat therfore that alle wommen ben wikke For though that he ne fond no good womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe Or elles per-aventure the entente of Salomon was this; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he fond no womman, this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee save god allone, as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie For ther nis no creature so good that him ne wanteth somwhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. Your thridde resoun is this ye seyn that 'if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over your persone.' Sir, save your grace, it is nat so For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but only of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte For soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois, whether he wole werke by that conseil or noon And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn that 'the janglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght,' as who seith, that 'a womman can nat hyde that she woot', sir, thise wordes been understonde of wommen that been jangleresses and wikked, of whiche wommen, men seyn that 'three thinges dryven a man out of his hous, that is to seyn, smoke, droppyng of reyn, and wikked

nat I, for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience, and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to

pos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil, certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed Thus sholde ye understonde the

that 'the conseillinge of wommen is outher to dere, or elles to litel of prys' But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and *hir conseil vile and*

forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse 'it is nat good to been a man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself' Here may ye se that, if that

What is bettre than jaspre? Wisdom. And what is bettre than wisdom? Womman And what is bettre than a good womman? No-thing' And sir, by manye of othre resons may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable And therfore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal *restore yow your doghter hool and sound* And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this cause"

16 Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus "I see wel that the word of Salomon is sooth, he seith, that 'wordes that been spoken discreetly by ordinaunce, been honycombes, for they yeven swetnesse to the soule,

your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your conseillour, and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte *Thobie his sone* 'at alle tymes thou

wisdom? Woman And what is better than woman? Nothing' And, sir, by many other examples you

affair with honour"

bones' And, wife, because of your sweet words, and because, moreover, I have tried and proved your great wisdom and your great truthfulness, I will be governed in all things by your counsels"

"Now, sir," said Dame Prudence, "since you give

that thy ways may be directed and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper.' And look to it that all your counsels are in Him for evermore Saint James, also, says 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of

of good counsel, and they are anger, and covetousness, and hastiness

"First, he that takes counsel within himself, cer-

angry,' as says Seneca, can speak only to berate and blame' And thus with his vicious words he drives others into a like state

"And too, sir, you must drive covetousness out of your heart For the Apostle says that 'The love of money is the root of all evil' And, trust me, a covetous man cannot judge correctly, nor can he think well, save only to the furtherance of his covetousness, and that, in truth, can never really be accomplished, because the richer he becomes, the greater desire has he for yet a larger abundance

"And, sir, you must drive hastiness out of your inmost heart For certain it is that you cannot hold to be best the sudden thought that comes into your heart, but you must weigh it and advise upon it For, as you have heard before, the common proverb has it that he who resolves in haste soon repents Sir, you are not always in like mood and of a like disposition, for surely that which at one time seems good to you, at another appears to be quite the contrary.

"When you have taken counsel within yourself, and have, after due deliberation, deemed such, or such, *a thing to be for the best, then, I advise you,*

lives, and if thou canst without offense, reveal them not For he heard and observed thee, and when time cometh he will hate thee' And another writer says 'Hardly shalt thou find one person who can keep secrets.' The Book says 'While thou dost keep thy counsel in thine own heart, thou keepest it imprisoned, and when thou revealest it to anyone, he holdeth thee imprisoned' And therefore it is better that you hide your thoughts within your own heart, than pray to him to whom you have told them that he will be close and keep silence For Seneca says 'If

shalt blesse god, and praye him to dresse thy weyes', and looke that alle thy conseils been in him for evermore Seint Jame eek seith: 'if any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of god.' And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and examine wel your thoghtes, of swich thing as yow thinketh that is best for your profit. And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three thinges that been contrariouse to good conseil, that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse.

18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-outen ire, for manye causes. The firste is this he that hath greet ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he may nat do. And secoundely, he that is irous and wroth, he ne may nat wel deme, and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseille The thridde is this, that 'he that is irous and wrooth,' as seith Senek, 'ne may nat speke but he blame thinges', and with his viciouse wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. And eek sir, ye moste dryve coveitise out of your herte. For the apostle seith, that 'coveitise is rote of alle harmes.' And trust wel that a coveitous man ne can noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his coveitise, and certes, that ne may never been accompliced, for ever the more habundaunce that he hath of richesse, the more he desyreth. And sir, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastifnesse, for certes, ye ne may nat deme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte For as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this, that 'he that sone demeth, sone repenteth.'

19 Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; for certes, som thing that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie

20 Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, thanne rede I yow, that ye *kepe* it secree. Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. For Jesus Syrak seith 'neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne thy *folie, for they wol yeve yow audience* and loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence' Another clerk seith, that 'scarsly shaltou finden any persone that may kepe conseil secreely' The book seith. 'whyl that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun and whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any

owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen *any other* wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?' But nathelees, if thou wene sikerly that the biwreying of thy con-

seil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stond en in the bettre plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente, for trust wel, that comunly thise conseillours been flatereres, namely the conseillours of grete lordes, for they enforcen hem alwey rather to speken plesante wordes, enclyninge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable And therfore men seyn, that 'the riche man hath seld good conseil but if he have it of himself' And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyne enemys And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most feithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseilling And of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil as the caas requireth

21 I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that been trewe For Salomon seith that 'right as the herte of a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule' He seith also 'ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend' For certes gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend And eek he seith, that 'a trewe freend is a strong deffense, who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour' Thanne shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse For the book seith 'axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wyse' And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges and been approved in conseillinges For the book seith that 'in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence' And Tullius seith that 'grete thinges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but by good conseil by auctoritee of persones, and by science the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age but certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day' And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale, for Salomon seith 'manye freendes have thou, but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseillour' For al be it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk if it be nede But loke alwey that thy conseillours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyd bifore that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon conseillour allone for somtyme bihoveth it to been conseilled by manye For Salomon seith 'salvacioun of thinges is wheras ther been manye conseillours'

22 Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counseilled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe First ye shul eschewe the conseilling of foles, for Salomon seith

I say that first you must call into council such of your friends as are true For Solomon says Oint

such an one hath found a treasure

Then too shall you consider whether your real friends are d screet and wise For the Book says Stand in the multitude of the elders and cl ave unto him that is wise And for this reason you should call to your council of your friends that have arrived at a proper age those who have seen and experienced many things and who have been approved in parliaments For the Book says With the ancient is wisdom and in length of days understand ng And Tullius says Great things are not accomplished by strength and activity of body but by counsel authority and knowledge and these things do not become enfeebled with age but rather grow stronger and increase day after day

And then you shall keep this for a general rule F rst you shall call to your council but a few of your most special friends For Solomon says Have thou many friends but of a thousand choose but one to be thy councillor And although you should at the first tell your secrets to but a fe afterward you may tell them to others if there be need But look to it always that your councillors have the three attributes that I have ment oned namely that they are true

estab ished

Now that I have told you of the sort of folk by whom you should be counselled I will teach you which sort of counsel you ought to eschew First, you shall avoid the counselling of fools. For Solomon

says Consult not with a fool for he cannot keep

also eschew the counselling of all flatterers such as force themselves rather to praise your person than to tell you the truth about things

Wherefore Tullius says that of all the pestilences of friendship the greatest is flattery And so it is more needful that you eschew and fear flatterers than any other kind of men The Book says that one should rather flee from and fear the sweet words of flatterers than the earnest words of the friend who tells one the truth Solomon says that the words of a flatterer are a snare wherewith to catch innocents He says also that he who speaks sweet words to his friend sets before his feet a net to catch him And therefore says Tullius Cicero Incline not thine ears to flatterers nor take counsel of flattering words And Cato says Be well advised and avoid sweet and pleasant words And you must also eschew the counsels of such of your former enemies as have be

reason for this It may not be says he that where fire has long existed there shall remain no vapour of heat And thereto says Solomon The kisses of an enemy are deceitful For certainly though your enemy may be reconciled and appear before you in all humility and bow his head to you you should never trust him Surely he feigns this humility more for his advantage than for any love of you for he thinks to gain some victory over you by such feigning the which he could not gain by strife of open war And Petrus Alfonsus says Have no fellowship with ancient foes for if you do good to them they will pervert it into evil And too you must eschew the advice of those who are your own servants and bear themselves toward you with all reverence for perchance they speak more out of fear than for love And therefore says a philosopher thus There is no one perfectly true to him of whom he is afraid And Tullius says There is no power of any emperor fitted to endure save it be founded more in the love of the people than in the fears You must also avoid the counselling of drunkards for they can retain nothing Solomon says that there is no secrecy where drunkenness reigns You should also suspect the coun

wicked For the Book says that the advice of the wicked is always full of fraud And David says that he is a happy man who has not followed the counselling of villains. You should also avoid and shun

'taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can noght conseille but after his owene lust and his affeccioun' The book seith. that 'the propretee of a fool is this, he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in himself' Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseilling of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterye than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges

23 Wherfore Tullius seith 'amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste is flaterye' And therfore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple The book seith 'thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preiseres, than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes' Salomon seith, that 'the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents' He seith also, that 'he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him' And therfore seith Tullius 'enclyne nat thynes eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterye' And Caton seith 'avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce' And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseilling of thyne olde enemys that been reconsiled The book seith that 'no wight retourneth saufly in to the grace of his olde enemy' And Isope seith 'ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som tyme werre or enmitee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil' And Seneca telleth the cause why 'It may nat be,' seith he, 'that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse' And therfore seith Salomon 'in thyn olde foo trust never' For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconsiled and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humilitee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone, by cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre And Peter Alfonce seith. 'make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys, for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in to wikkednesse' And eek thou most eschewe the conseilling of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence, for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love And therfore seith a philosophre in this wyse 'ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth' And Tullius seith 'ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but if he have more love of the peple than drede' Thou shalt also eschewe the conseiling of folk that been dronkelewe, for they ne can no conseil hyde For Salomon seith. 'ther is no privetee ther as regneth

hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly

and werketh prively the contrarie' Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseilling of wikked folk For the book seith 'the conseilling of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude'. And David seith 'blisful is

24 Now, sir, that I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius In the examininge thanne of your conseillour, ye shul considere manye thinges Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt have conseil, that verray trouthe be seyd and conserved, this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale For he that seith fals may nat wel be conseilled, in that cas of which he lyeth. And after this, thou shalt considere the thinges that acorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseillours, if resoun accorde therto, and eek, if thy might may atteine ther-to, and if the more part and the bettre part of thy conseillours acorde ther to, or no. Thanne shaltou considere what thing shal folwe of that conseilling, as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or damage, and manye othere thinges And in alle thise thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weyve alle other thinges Thanne shaltow considere of what rote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and what frut it may conceyve and engendre Thou shalt eek considere alle thise causes, fro whennes they been sprongen And whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyd, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable, and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde, thanne shaltou considere, if thou mayst parfourne it and maken of it a good ende For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfourne it as him oghte Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevy a charge that he mighte nat bere it

er thou mayst parfourne a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne And Piers Alphonce seith 'if thou hast might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is bettre "nay" than "ye",' this is to seyn, that thee is bettre holde thy tonge stille, than for to speke Thanne may ye understonde by strenger resons, that if thou hast power to parfourne a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it bettre that thou suffre than biginne Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourne it or no And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyd biforn, and knowen wel that ye may parfourne youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende

the advice of the young, for their judgments are not mature

"And now, sir, that I have shown you as to the

lor to the test, you must consider many things First, you should consider that, in this very thing that you

to attain your purpose, and whether the major and

burden so heavy that he cannot bear it For says the proverb He that too much embraces, confines but little And Cato says 'Attempt only what thou hast power to do, lest the great task so oppress thee that it shall behoove thee to forgo that which thou hast begun' And if it be that you are in doubt whether

counsels, as I have set forth, and are convinced that you can carry through your enterprise to its goal, conform to it, then, gravely and carefully to the end

Now it is time that I instruct you when and for what you may change your intention without reproach For truly a man may change purpose and plan when the cause for them is removed or when a new condition arises For the law says that new conditions demand new counsels And Seneca says If thy plan be come to the ears of thine enemy change thy plan ' You may also change your plan if it devel

dates are invalid And plans may be altered if they are impossible of fulfilment or may not well be performed

And take this for a general rule That every counsel that is so rigorously established that it cannot be altered for any condition that may arise I say that that counsel is vicious

This Melibeus when he had heard all the doctrines of his wife Dame Prudence answered her

the particular and tell me how you like them and how they appear to you—I mean the councillors who have been already chosen in the present need

My lord said she I beg of you in all humility that you will not wilfully object to my reasons nor allow anger to enter your heart even though I should say things that must displease you For God knows that as for my intention I speak to your best interest your honour and your advantage And truly I hope that your benignity will take it all in patience Trust me your counselling in this case should not be called counselling properly speaking but only a motion to do folly and you have erred in many ways

council a great multitude of persons all very burdensome and all very tiresome to hear Also you have erred thus whereas you should have called into council only your true friends elderly and wise you have gathered here many strange men and young men false flatterers reconciled enemies and men who do you reverence without love Again you have erred

your desire to make war and obtain vengeance they have learned from your speeches the thing toward

25 Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow, whanne, and wherfore, that ye may chaunge your conseil with-outen your repreve Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth For the lawe seith that 'upon thinges that newely bityden bihoveth newe conseil ' And Senek seith 'if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyn enemy, chaunge thy conseil ' Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by errour or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil For the lawes seyn that 'alle bihestes that been dishonest been of no value ' And eek, if it so be that it be inpossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept

26 And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked '

27 This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse Dame," quod he, "as yet in-to this tyme ye

how lyketh yow, or what semeth yow, by our conseillours that we han chosen in our present nede "

28 'My lord," quod she, "I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol nat wilfully replye agayn my resouns, ne distempre your herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese For god wot that, as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your profite eke And soothly, I hope that your benignitee wol taken it in pacience Trusteth me wel," quod she, ' that your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilling, but a mocioun or a moevyng of folye, in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse

29 First and forward, ye han erred in th'assemblinge of your conseillours For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to here Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withouten love And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse, the whiche three thinges been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable, the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your self ne in your conseillours, as yow oghte Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseillours your talent, and your affeccioun to make werre anon and for to do vengeance, they han espyed by your

wordes to what thing ye been enclyned And ther fore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by thise conseillours only, and with litel avys, wher as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been neces sarie mo conseillours, and more deliberacioun to parfourne your emprise Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseyde manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisioun bitwixe your conseillours, this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseillours ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre, and ther been ye condescended. And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, and therfore the conseils that been at congre gaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of

certein caas, and for certeine juste causes, I am al redy to chaunge my conseillours, right as thou wolt devyse The proverbe seith that for to do sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel' "

30 To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde 'Examineth," quod she, 'your conseil and lat us see the whiche of hem han spok en most resonably, and taught yow best conseil And for as muche as that the examinacioun is necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matere I sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyd yow

sholde do the more ententif bisinesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere For al be-it so that they been your freendes, therfore shal ye nat suf fren that they serve yow for noght, but ye oghte the rather guerdone hem and shewe hem your largesse And as touchinge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, that, in maladyes, that oon contrarie is warisshed by another contrarie, I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence' 'Certes," quod Melibeus, "I understonde it in this wyse that, right as they han

and with little advising whereas in so great and high a matter it was really encumbent upon you to have procured more councillors and to have delib erated longer upon the means of performing your

erly and wise of them but you have cast the words of every man into a hotchpot and you have then in clined your heart toward the majority and upon that s de have you stooped to folly And since you well

Melibeus answered her again saying I grant that I have erred but s nce you have already told me that he is not to blame who changes councillors un der certain conditions and for just causes I stand

such an examination is necessary let us begin with the surgeons and physicians who spoke the first in this cause I say that the surgeons and physicians have spoken discreetly as they should and they wisely spoke when they said that to their profession belongs the duty of dealing honourably with every man and to his profit and to harm no one and according to their skill to set diligently about the healing of those under their care And sir since they have answered w sely and discreetly I advise that they be richly and nobly rewarded for their noble speech and too that they may be the more atten tive to the healing of your dear daughter For though they are your friends you must not suffer it that they serve you for nothing you ought indeed but

op nion of it

Indeed said Melibeus I understand it thus That just as they have done me an injury, so should I do them another For just as they have revenged themselves upon me and have thereby done me a wrong so shall I now take my revenge and do them

a wrong And then shall I have cured one contrary by another "

[illegible]

in this sense For, indeed wickedness is not the contrary of wickedness, nor is vengeance of vengeance, nor wrong of wrong, but they are their likenesses And therefore one vengeance is not to be cured by another vengeance, nor one wrong by another wrong, but, rather, each of them fructifies and engenders upon the other But the words of the physicians [illegible]

cord by concord, war by peace and so on of other [illegible]

and harmony [illegible]

upon the safety of your person, you must understand that he who is at war should meekly and devoutly [illegible]

but in vain ' Now then, sir, you shall commit the guarding of your person to your true friends, approved and well known, for of them only should you [illegible]

fonsus says 'Never take company of a strange man, on the way, unless it is that you have known him [illegible]

doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. For right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong; and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another "

31. "Lo, lo!" quod dame Prudence, "how lightly is every man enclyned to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce! Certes," quod she, "the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wyse. For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong, but they been semblable. And therfore, o vengeaunce is nat warisshed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong, but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth other But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wyse· for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges But certes, wikkednesse shal be warisshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. And heer-to accordeth Seint Paul the apostle in manye places He seith· 'ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche, but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse him that seith to thee harm.' And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wyse folk, that seyden alle by oon accord as ye han herd bifore, that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone, ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and devoutly [illegible]

[illegible] lord Jesu Crist To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith. 'if god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth ' Now sir, thanne shul ye committe the keping of your persone to your trewe freendes that been approved and y-knowe, and of hem shul ye axen help your persone for to kepe For Catoun seith 'if thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes, for ther nis noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend' And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, and have alwey in suspect hir companye. For Piers Alfonce seith 'ne take no companye by the weye of a straunge man, but if so be that thou have known him of a lenger [illegible]

goost thider as thou wolt nat go, and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd hold thee on the lift syde' And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyd bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, that for any presumpcioun of your strengthe, that ye ne dispyse nat ne acounte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun, for every wys man dredeth his enemy And Salomon seith 'weleful is he that of alle hath drede, for certes, he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte and thurgh the hardinesse of him self hath to greet presumpcioun him shal yvel bityde' Thanne shul ye evermore countrewayte embusshements and alle espiaille For Senek seith that the wyse man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes, ne he ne falleth in to perils, that perils escheweth' And al be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in kepinge of thy persone, this is to seyn ne be nat necligent to kepe thy persone, nat only fro thy gretteste enemys but fro thy leeste [illegible]

so coward that thou doute ther wher as is no drede The book seith that somme folk han greet lust to deceyve but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved' Yet shaltou drede to been empoisoned, and kepe yow from the companye of scorneres For the book seith, with scorneres make no companye, but flee hir wordes as venim'

32 Now as to the seconde point, wher-as your wyse conseillours conseilled yow to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence'

33 Melibeus answerde and seyde, Certes I understonde [illegible]

hous so kepen [illegible]

of grete edifices apperteneth som tyme to pryde, and eek men make heighe toures and grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille, and whan that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse And understond wel [illegible]

on his left And hereafter shall you wisely hold your self verily aloof from the sorts of people I have described and eschew both them and their counsel And you shall not presume so much upon your strength that you are led to despise and hold as naught the [illegible]

Now as to the second point wherein your wise councillors have advised you to provision and garrison your house I would know how you understand their words, and what is your opinion of them

Melibeus answered and said Verily I understand them in this wise that I am to equip my house with [illegible]

To this judgment Prudence then replied The garrisoning, provisioning and equipping of high towers is sometimes but the pandering to pride And it sometimes happens that even when men build high towers and great fortresses at much cost and with

the love of a lord's own citizens and people

For Tullius says 'In every act, or ever thou begin it, array thyself with great diligence' Then, say I, in

long preparation And Cassiodorus says that the garrison is the stronger for being well prepared

sudden war are not your friends Let us now consider who they are that you hold so steadfastly to be friends of your person For though you are a mighty man, and a rich true it is that you do but stand alone For you have no child, save a daughter, nor have you any brothers, or cousins, or other near kinsmen for the dread of whom your enemies might forgo treating with you or attempting to destroy your

incentive to avenge your death But your enemies are three, and they have many children, brothers, cousins, and other near kinsmen, and though it were that you had slain two or three of them, yet there

ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but that yow oghte purveyen and apparaillen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet de-

diligence' Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-tak-

afore-seyd But nathelees, lat us now descende to the special Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquere, for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, and how manye trespassours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun,

hastif vengeance And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel knowen whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse, for trewely, alle tho that conseilleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes as to your persone For al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. For

stroye your persone. Ye knowen also, that your richesses moten been dispended in diverse parties, and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede;

and, though so were that thou haddest slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y nowe to wreken hir deeth and to slee thy persone And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, yet nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede, they been but litel sib to yow, and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than youres Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeaunce, whether it accorde to resoun? And certes, ye knowe wel 'nay' For as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the juge that hath the

if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnesse and to thy conseillours And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that 'nay' For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich thing as we may doon rightfully And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee Thanne mowe ye seen, that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnesse. Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth 'consequent.' Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take is the consequent And ther-of folweth another vengeaunce, peril, and werre, and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth 'engendringe,' thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys, and of the vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre an other vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of richesses, as I seyde

37 Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth 'causes,' which that is the laste point, thou shalt understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua* this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause The fer cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges The neer cause is thy three enemys The cause accidental was hate The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. The cause final was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by conjectinge and by supposinge For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith. 'selden or with greet peyne been causes y broght to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne'

should remain enough to avenge those deaths by killing you And though it were that your own kindred are true and more steadfast than those of your enemies, yet nevertheless your own kinsmen are but distantly related to you whereas the kinsmen of your adversaries are closely sib to them And, cer

swer is nay For you know well that there is no man who may take vengeance upon anyone, save the judge who has proper jurisdiction, and when it has been granted to him to take such vengeance hastily or slowly, as the law requires And, moreover as to

you was engendered of the hate of your enemies, and of the vengeance taken on that evil would be begotten another vengeance and therewithal much sorrow and wastage of wealth as I have pointed out

Now, sir as to the point which Tullius calls causes which is the last point to consider you must

enemies in this case I cannot judge save in conjecture and supposition Yet we may suppose that they shall come to an evil end for the *Book of Decrees* says Seldom and only with great pain are causes brought to a good end, when they have been badly begun.'

"Now, sir, if men ask me why God has suffered men to do this villainy, certainly I can answer nothing in any reliable language For the Apostle says

"Your name is Melibee which is to say, a man who drinks honey [1] You have drunk so much of the sweet honey of mundane riches and delights and honours that you are intoxicated therewith, and have

fered to enter into your heart through the windows

mitted it that your three enemies have entered your

ed are set apart from the good men And they that have the will to do wickedly restrain their evil purpose when they see the punishment and chastisement of other wrongdoers '

To th s replied Dame Prudence "Surely," said she, ' I grant that much good and much evil come of vengeance, but vengeance taking does not belong

38 Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat well answere as for no sothfastnesse For th'apostle seith, that 'the sciences and the juggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe, ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffi-

39 Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, a man that drinketh hony '[1] Thou hasty-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel richesses and delices and honours of this world, that thou art dronken, and hast forgeten Jesu Crist thy creatour, thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith 'under the hony

and povre And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned awey fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde, and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thow hast y-trespassed Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist, for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessh, the feend, and the world, thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places, this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred in-to thyn hous by the windowes, and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere "

40 "Certes," quod Melibee, "I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys, *shewinge me the perils and the yveles* that mighten falle of this vengeance But who-so wolde considere in alle vengeances the perils and yveles that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm, for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men And they that han wil to do wikkednesse restreyne hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours " [And to this answerde dame Prudence "Certes," seyde she, "I graunte wel that of vengeaunce cometh muchel yvel and muchel good, but vengeance-taking aperteneth nat unto

y unto juges and unto hem that

pon the trespassours] And yet

ight as a singuler persone sin-

geance of another man, right so

ne do no vengeance of hem that

it han deserved For Senek seith thus 'that maister,' he seith, is good that proveth shrewes' And as Cassidore seith 'A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it displeseth to the juges and sovereyns' And another seith 'the juge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes.' And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un to the Romayns that 'the juges beren nat the spere with-outen cause', but they beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men If ye wol thanne take vengeance of your enemys, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the juge that hath the jurisdiccion up-on hem, and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth "

41 "A! " quod Melibee, " this vengeance lyketh me no-thing I bithenke me now and take hede,

42 "Certes" quod Prudence, ' if ye wol werke by my conseil ye shul nat assaye fortune by no wey, ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hir, after the word of Senek for 'thinges that been folily doon, and that been in hope of fortune, shullen never come to good ende' And as the same Senek seith. the more cleer and the more shyning that fortune is the more brotil and the sonner broken she is' Trusteth nat in hir, for she nis nat stidefast ne stable, for whan thow trowest to be most seur or siker of hir help, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee And wheras ye seyn that fortune hath norissed yow fro your childhede, I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hir and in hir wit For Senek seith 'what man that is norissed by fortune, she maketh him a greet fool' Now thanne, sin ye desyre and axe vengeance, and the vengeance that is doon after the lawe and bifore the juge ne lyketh yow nat, and the *vengeance that is doon in hope of* fortune is perilous and uncertein, thanne have ye noon other remedie but for to have your recours

43 Melibee answerde, if I ne venge me nat of the vileinye that men han doon to me, I sompne or warne *hem that han doon to me that vileinye* and alle othere, to do me another vileinye For it is writen if thou take no vengeance of an old vileinye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a newe vileinye' And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte neither bere it ne sustene, and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe For men seyn in muchel suffringe shul manye thinges falle un to thee whiche thou *shalt nat mowe suffre*' "

44 Certes" quod Prudence, "I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nis nat good, but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every persone to

And Saint Paul the Apostle says in his Epistle to the

d ction over them and he will punish them as the law demands and requires

Ah! exclaimed Melibeus This idea of venge

trust now to her and to her ingenuity For Seneca says As for the man who is nursed by Fortune she will make of h m a great fool Now then since you

dangerous and uncertain then remains to you no

adıertise to those who have injured me and to all

Certainly said Prudence I grant you that too much of sufferance is not a good thing but yet it follows not therefrom that every person to whom

[illegible]

of any realm might show so much leniency to criminals and evil-doers that, from such sufferance, in process of time, they might so wax in power as to turn out the judges and the monarchs from their places, and thus, at last, deprive them of the mastery.

"But now let us assume that you have a proper leave to avenge yourself I say that you have not now the power to avenge yourself For if you will compare your own with the power and might of your adversaries, you shall find, in many ways, as I have previously pointed out, that their condition is better than yours. And therefore say I that it is well, as for this time to suffer your injuries in patience

"Furthermore, you know well the common saw It is madness in a man to strive with one who is stronger than himself, and to strive with a man of even strength is dangerous, but to strive with a weaker man is foolish And for this reason a man should avoid all strife, in so far as he may For Solomon says that it is to a man's honour if he withhold himself from noise and strife And if it so happen that a man of greater power or strength does you an injury, make it your business to study how to stop the pain of it rather than how to avenge it For Seneca says 'He puts himself into great peril who strives with a greater than himself' And Cato says 'If a man of higher degree or estate, or one more mighty than thou do thee an annoyance or grievance, tolerate him, for he that once has grieved thee, at another time he may relieve and help' Yet I am assuming that you have both the power and the licence to avenge yourself I say nevertheless, that there are very many things which ought to constrain you to withhold your punishment, and make you rather incline toward sufferance and to have patience under whatever may have been done to you First and foremost, if you will, consider the faults in your own person, for which defects God has permitted that you have this tribulation as I said before For

[illegible]

whom men doon vileinye take of it vengeance, for that aperteneth and longeth al only to the juges, for they shul venge the vileinyes and iniuries And ther-fore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyd above, been only understonden in the juges, for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileinyes to be doon withouten punisshinge, they sompne nat a man al only for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it Also a wys man seith, that 'the juge that correcteth nat the sinnere comandeth and biddeth him do sinne' And the juges and sovereyns mighten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and misdoeres, that they sholden by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power and might, that they sholden putte out the juges and the sovereyns from hir places, and atte laste maken hem lesen hir lordshipes.

45. But lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow I seye ye been nat of might and power as now to venge yow For if ye wole maken comparisoun un-to the might of your adversaries, ye shul finde in manye thinges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hir condicioun is bettre than youres. And therfore seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient.

46. Forther-more, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, 'it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strenger or a more mighty man than he is him-self, and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril, and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie.' And therfore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte For Salomon seith 'it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf' And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, studie and bisie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee For Senek seith that 'he putteth him in greet peril that stryveth with a gretter man than he is him-self' And Catoun seith 'if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee anoy or grevaunce, suffre him for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe' Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyne yow of vengeance-takinge, and make yow for to enclyne to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene persone, for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyd yow heer-biforn For the poete seith, that 'we oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and con-

[illegible]

semen the lesse un-to hym, and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, in-so-muche semeth his peyne the lighter and the

esier un-to him ' Also ye owen to enclyne and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Jesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles 'Jesu Crist,' he seith, 'hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him, for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous

sert or gilt, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. And the joye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle 'the joye of god,' he seith, 'is perdurable,' that is to seyn, everlastinge Also troweth and bileveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience For

angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth ' He seith also 'it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong, and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees ' And therfore seith seint Jame in his epistle that 'pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun ' "

47 "Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun, but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken, ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, for myn herte may never been in pees un-to the tyme it be venged And albe-it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys, to

a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another "

48 "A!" quod dame Prudence, "ye seyn your wil *and as yow lyketh, but in no caas of the world* a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. For Cassidore seith that 'as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage ' And therfore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen, and therfore seith Senek that 'a man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse ' And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, certes ye seye sooth,

little while endure, being soon over and ended But

"Surely," said Melibeus, "I will grant you, Dame Prudence, that patience is a great virtue of perfection but every man may not attain to the perfection

upon me, yet took they no heed of their own peril, but fulfilled their evil purpose And therefore it seems to me that men ought not to find fault with me if I incur a little peril in taking vengeance, even though I go to great excess, that is to say, that I avenge one outrage with another "

"Ah," said Dame Prudence, "you speak out of your *purpose as you desire it to happen*, but never in this

man defend himself violently against violence, and fightingly against fighting, certainly you speak but

now defending yourself, but are going to revenge yourself, and so it follows that you have no wish to do your deed with moderation That is why I hold that patience would be good for you For Solomon says He that is not patient shall endure great evil '"

"Certainly," said Melibeus, "I grant you that

deed that is to say, my grief and unrest, touches me closely Therefore, if I am angry and impatient, it is no marvel And, saving your presence, I cannot see wherein it can greatly harm me if I wreak my re

wealth

When Prudence had heard her husband boast thus

rich, she may make choice of a thousand men, which she will take for her husband, for, of a thousand, not one will forsake or refuse her ' And this Pam

that thou become poor, then farewell fellowship and friendship, for thou shalt be left alone, without any

whan the defense is doon anon with-outen intervalle or with-outen tarying or delay, for to defenden him and nat for to vengen him And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defence, that men have no cause ne matere to repreven him that defendeth him of excesse and outrage; for elles were it agayn resoun Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; and so seweth it that ye han no wil to do your dede attemprely. And therfore, me thinketh that pacience is good For Salomon seith· that 'he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm.'"

49. "Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte yow, that whan a man is inpacient and wroth, of that that toucheth him noght and that aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder For the lawe seith· that 'he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him' And Salomon seith that 'he that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lyk to him that taketh an hound by the eres' For right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is outherwhyle biten with the hound, right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that by his inpacience medleth him of the noyse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my disese, toucheth me right ny And therfore, though I be wroth and inpacient, it is no merveille And savinge your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeaunce, for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been And wel knowen ye, that

avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispreisinge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse "certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty, and that the richesses been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel conne usen hem For right as the body of a man may nat liven withoute the soule, namore may it live withouten temporel goodes. And by richesses may a man gete him grete freendes. And therfore seith Pamphilles 'if a netherdes doghter,' seith he, 'be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde, for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir.' And this Pamphilles seith also 'if

noble by the richesses ' And right so as by richesses ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverte come

ther manye harmes and yveles For greet poverte constreyneth a man to do manye yveles And therfore clepeth Cassidore poverte 'the moder of ruine,' that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge doun And therfore seith Piers Alfonce 'oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverte to eten the almesse of his enemy' And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes, he seith that 'sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger, for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger, and if he axe, he dyeth for shame, and algates necessitee constreyneth him to axe' And therfore seith Salomon. that 'bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverte' And as the same Salomon seith 'bettre it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse' By thise resons that I have seid un to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, I graunte yow that richesses been goode to hem that geten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho richesses And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul bere yow in gaderinge of richesses,

yveles And therfore seith Salomon 'he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent' He seith also that 'the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man, but that richesse that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth' And sir, ye shul geten richesses by your wit and by your travaille un to your profit, and that with-outen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone For the lawe seith that 'ther maketh no man himselven riche, if he do harm to another wight', this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make himself riche un to the harm of another persone And Tullius seith that 'no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne no-thing that may falle un to a man is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm

mon seith that 'ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles' And the same Salomon seith. that 'he that travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed, but he that is ydel and casteth him to no bisinesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in to poverte, and dye for hunger' And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit For ther is a versifiour seith. that 'the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold, and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete' For thise causes seith Caton 'waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe, for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye

For these reasons that I have given, and for many

Enemy, find you not unoccupied For the Devil takes not easily into his service those whom he finds occupied in good deeds '

ness and penuriousness, in the same wise is he to be

is to say spend it within measure, for those who foolishly spend and waste what riches they have, when they have no longer any property of their own,

sever or part him therefrom, when he knows or

they be kept so closely that they may not be opened by pity and good will. That is to say, in order to give a part to those in need But yet thy wealth should not be so openly exposed as to become the goods

vices ' And therfore seith seint Jerome 'doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied ' For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes '

nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender For right as men blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely And therfore seith Caton, 'use,' he seith, 'thy richesses that thou hast geten in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche, for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs ' He seith also 'the goodes that thou hast y geten, use hem by mesure,' that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably, for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man I seye thanne, that ye shul fleen avarice, usinge your richesses in swich manere, that men seye that your richesses been y buried, but that ye have hem in your might and in your weeldinge For a wys man repreveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers 'wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye, for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf ' And for what cause or enchesoun joyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un to hise goodes, that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes, and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal nothing bere with him out of this world? And therfore seith seint Augustin that 'the avaricious man is likned un to helle, that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure ' And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool large Therfore seith Tullius 'the goodes,' he seith, 'of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee', that is to seyn, to yeven part of hem that han greet nede, 'ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes ' Afterward, in getinge of your richesses and in usinge hem, ye shul alwey have three thinges in your herte, that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name First, ye shul have god in your herte, and for no richesse ye shullen do nothing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker For after the word of Salomon 'it is bettre to have a litel good with the love of god, than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god.' And the prophete seith. that 'bettre it is to been a good man and have

litel good and tresour, than to been holden a shrewe and have grete richesses ' And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your businesse to gete yow richesses, so that ye gete hem with good conscience And th'apostle seith that 'ther nis thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet joye as whan our conscience bereth us good witnesse ' And the wyse man seith 'the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is nat in mannes con-

'bettre it is and more it availleth a man to have a

than any tresour, be it never so precious ' And certes he sholde nat be called a gentil man, that

teth at noght his gode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl

53 Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getinge richesses, and how ye shullen usen hem, and I see wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre richesses, ye wole moeve werre and bataille I conseille yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your richesses, for they ne suffysen noght werres to mayntene And therfore seith a philosophre 'that man that desyreth and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce, for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie ' And Salomon seith, that 'the gretter richesses that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath ' And dere sire, al be-it so that for your richesses ye mowe have muchel folk, yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-as ye mowe in other manere have pees, unto your worship and profit For the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man, but it lyth in the wil and in the hand of our lord god almighty And therfore Judas Machabeus, which was goddes knight, whan he sholde fighte

wealth so that you gather it with a good conscience And the apostle says that there is not anything in all this world whereof a man should have so great a joy

riches and in the using them you must busy your self and be diligent to observe that your good name be kept and conserved For Solomon says A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches ' And

it is a sign of a good heart in a man when he loves and desires to have and to keep an honoured name ' And thereupon says Saint Augustine Two things there be which are necessary and needful and they are good conscience and a good name that is to

name toward his neighbour—he is but a boor

funds for the richer he is the more must his ex

a good thing to initiate a war when you may have a peace and that to your own honour and profit For victory in battle in this world lies not in a great

upon to fight against an adversary greatly superior in

Heaven' And, dear sir, for as much as there is no man certain whether he be worthy that God give him the victory, any more than he can be certain

you have adduced before me, you are not in favour of war, but I have not yet heard you advise as to what course I ought to pursue in this extremity"

"Certainly," quoth she, "I counsel you that you accord with your adversaries, and that you have peace with them For Saint James says in his Epistle that by concord and peace little fortunes grow great, and by discord and warfare are great fortunes brought low And well you know that one of the greatest

love neither my honour nor my reputation You know well that my adversaries have begun this quar-

self humble before them, and cry mercy of them? Forsooth that were not to my honour For just as men say that too much familiarity breeds contempt, so fares it with overmuch humility or meekness"

Then began Dame Prudence to make a show of wrath, and she said 'Certainly, sir, saving your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do my own, and so have I ever, nor have you or any other hitherto said anything to the contrary And yet, if I had said that you should have bought a peace and a reconciliation, I had not been much mistaken nor said very far amiss For the wise man says that dis

evil fortune

torie of bataile cometh nat by the grete nombre of peple, but it cometh from our lord god of hevene' And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if he be worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein whether he be worthy

as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, 'the dedes of batailles been aventurouse and nothing certeyne, for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another' And for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as

wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and by your resons that ye han shewed me, that the

that 'by concord and pees the smale richesses wex-

loven nat myn honour ne my worshipe Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconsiled Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeye me to hem, and crye hem mercy? For sothe, that were nat my worship For right as men seyn, that 'over-greet homlinesse engendreth dispreysinge,' so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse"

56 Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, "certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon, ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. And yit, if I hadde seyd that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconsiliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken

I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries

[illegible]

[illegible]

58 Thanne seide dame Prudence, "I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. For Salomon seith 'he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewinge [illegible]

[illegible] answere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfille and parforne it"

60 Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil [illegible]

[illegible] sende your adversaries un-to yow, and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements For Salomon seith 'whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and of grace' [illegible]

[illegible] Dame," quod Melibee, "dooth your wil and your [illegible]

[illegible] nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for thise adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre, and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce of the injurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter.

When Melibee had heard Dame Prudence show anger thus, he said "Dame, I pray you that you be not displeased at things I say, for you know well that [illegible]

[illegible] am but bound the more to love you and praise you For Solomon says that he that reproves him who has done a folly shall have more grace than he that deceives him with sweet words'

Then said Dame Prudence "I make no show of wrath or anger save for your great profit For Solo[illegible]

[illegible] visage of a man (that is to say, by the sorry and heavy countenance of a man) the fool corrects and amends himself"

Then said Melibee "I shall not know how to answer so many fair and good reasons as you show and lay before me. Speak out briefly your counsel and your wish, for I am ready to fulfill and to perform it"

Then Dame Prudence showed him all her wish [illegible]

[illegible] mon says that when the condition of a man is pleas[illegible]

"Dame," quoth Melibee, "do your whole will and whatsoever pleases you For I put myself entirely at your disposal and command"

Then Dame Prudence [illegible]

[illegible] and told them in a gracious manner that they ought to be repentant for the injury and wrong they had done to Melibee, her lord, and to herself, and to her daughter

And when they heard the gracious words of Dame

prophet, for the reconciliation we are in no way worthy of, though we ought but in the greater contrition and humility to ask it—this, of your goodness, you have offered to us Now see we well that the wisdom and knowledge of Solomon are true indeed, for he says that sweet words multiply and increase friends and cause villains to become courteous and humble

'Certainly," said they, "we will put our actions and all our matter and cause wholly in your good

consider and acknowledge that we have offended and

chance he has for us such a heaviness of wrath, what of our offense, that he will impose upon us so great a pain of punishment that we shall not be able to bear it And therefore, noble lady, we beseech you of your womanly pity to take such advisement in this need that we, and our friends, shall not be disinherited and destroyed because of our folly "

'Certainly," said Prudence, "it is a hard thing, and a dangerous for a man to put himself utterly into the arbitrament and judgment and into the might and power of his enemies For Solomon says 'Give not thy son and wife, thy brother and friend, power over thee while thou livest, and give not thy goods to another lest it repent thee, and thou entreat for the same again As long as thou livest and hast breath in thee, give not thyself over to any ' Now, since he counsels that a man give not even to a brother or a friend the power over his body, by a stronger reason he forbids a man to give himself over to his enemy Nevertheless, I counsel you that you mistrust not my lord For I know well and truly that he is kindly and meek, large hearted, courteous, and

Then said they with one voice "Worshipful lady, we put ourselves and our property all fully at your command and disposal, and we are ready to come, upon whatever day is agreeable to your goodness, to make and give our obligation and bond, and that as

63 And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, they weren so surprised and ravisshed, and hadden so greet joye of hir, that wonder was to telle "A! lady!" quod they, "ye han shewed un-to us 'the blessinge of swetnesse,' after the sawe of David the prophete, for the reconsilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humilitee, ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful trewe, for he seith that 'swete wordes multiplyen and encresen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke '

64 Certes," quod they, "we putten our dede and al our matere and cause al hoolly in your goode wil, and been redy to obeye to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee And therfore, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, that it lyke unto your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes, for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure, so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken hise amendes And therfore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to doon al his wil and hise comandements But peraventure he hath swich hevinesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, that he wole enjoyne us swich a peyne as we mowe nat bere ne sustene And therfore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, to taken swich avysement in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye "

65 "Certes," quod Prudence, "it is an hard thing and right perilous, that a man putte al outrely in the arbitracioun and juggement, and in the might and power of hise enemys For Salomon seith 'leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn, I seye,' quod he, 'ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother ne yeve thou never might ne maistrie of thy body, whyl thou livest.' Now sithen he defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the might of his body, by a strenger resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy And nathelees I conseille you, that ye mistruste nat my lord For I woot wel

our Forther more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede with-outen my conseil And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconsiled un to us "

66 Thanne seyden they with o vois, "worship-

bond as strong as it lyketh un to your goodnesse, that we mowe fulfille the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee "

67 Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of thise men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant, knowlechinge ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas, and how they were redy to suffren al peyne, requiringe and preyinge him of mercy and pitee.

68 Thanne seyde Melibee, "he is wel worthy to have pardoun and foryifnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence For Senek seith 'ther is the remissioun and foryifnesse, wheras confessioun is'; for confession is neighebore to innocence And he seith in another place 'he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remissioun.' And therfore I assente and conferme me to have pees, but it is good that we do it nat with-outen the assent and wil of our freendes "

69 Thanne was Prudence right glad and joyeful, and seyde, "Certes, sir," quod she, "ye han

70 And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or taryinge, sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes whiche that were trewe and wyse, and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed and declared, and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, and hadden examined it by greet bisinesse and greet diligence, they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste, and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy

71 And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and seyde "ther is an old proverbe," quod she, "seith that 'the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it, and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe ' And therfore I conseille that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, un-to your adversaries, tellinge hem, on your bihalve, that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, that they shape hem, with-outen delay or tarying, to comen un-to us " Which thing parfourned was in dede And whanne thise trespassours

strong as your goodness may desire all that we may fulfill your will and that of Lord Melibee "

When Dame Prudence had heard the answers of these men, she sent them away again, secretly And she returned to Lord Melibee and reported to him how she had found these adversaries ready to suffer pain and punishment, praying him, however, for mercy and pity.

"Then," said Melibee, "he is well worthy of par

edges it, is worthy of remission ' Therefore I assent to peace but it is best that we do this with the advice and consent of our friends "

Then was Dame Prudence right glad and joyful, and she said ' Certainly, sir, you have well answered For just as by the counsel, assent, and help of your friends you have been stirred to avenge yourself and go to war, just so you should not, without their consent, accord and make peace with your adversaries For the law says There is nothing so good in kind as that a thing shall be unbound by him by whom it was bound '

And then Dame Prudence, without delay or tarrying, sent messengers for their kindred and for their old friends who were true and wise and told them in detail and in order, in the presence of Melibee, all of this matter, as it has been here expressed and

and mercy

the morrow Therefore I counsel you that you send wise and discreet messengers to your adversaries, bidding them that, if they are still minded to treat with you of peace and concord, they come hither to us without delay or tarrying "

the messengers in obedience to the command of Lord Melibee

Soon then they took their way toward Melibee's court and they took with them some of their true friends to stand as sureties for them and as hostages And when they were come into the presence of Melibee he spoke to them as follows It stands thus and true it is that you without just cause, and with

punishment the chastisement, and the vengeance of this thing to me and to my wife Prudence? Or will you not?

Then the wisest of these three answered for all of them saying Sir we know well that we are un

know that your liberal grace and mercy reach out farther into goodness than reach our outrageous guilts and trespasses into wickedness and this despite the fact that we have wickedly and damnably offended against your high lordship

Then Melibee took them benignly up from the ground and received their obligations and bonds by their oaths and their pledges and sureties and

strip them out of their inheritances, and then to send them into perpetual banishment '

Certainly," said Dame Prudence ' that were a

of the apostle, covetousness is the root of all evil

inges to hir hord Melibee and to al his companye, and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeye to the comandement of hir lord Melibee

72 And right anon they token hir wey to the court of Melibee, and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for hem and for to been hir borwes And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes "it standeth thus," quod Melibee, "and sooth it is, that ye, causeleess, and with-outen skile and resoun, han doon grete injuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth, and therfore wol I knowe and wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punissement and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence or ye wol nat?"

73 Thanne the wyseste of hem three answerde for hem alle, and seyde "sire," quod he, "we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, that trewely we han deserved the deeth But yet, for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee that all the world witnesseth of your persone, we submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of your gracious lordshipe, and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements, bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol considere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, and graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespas and offence For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy strecchen hem ferther in to goodnesse, than doon our outrageouse giltes and trespas in to wikkednesse, al be-it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe"

74 Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground

to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd, whiche thinges ordeyned, every man retourned to his hous

75 And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries?

76 To which Melibee answerde and seyde, "certes," quod he, "I thinke and purpose me fully to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exil for ever"

77 "Certes," quod dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good, and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a coveitous name, which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man For after the sawe of the word of the apostle 'coveitise is

rote of alle harmes' And therfore, it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere For bettre

novelle his good name, for it is writen, that 'the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renovelled'

do, I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per aventure, and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn And therfore, if ye

lord as whan he is debonaire and meke, and ap peseth him lightly' And I prey yow that ye wol forbere now to do vengeance, in swich a manere, th t your goode name may be kept and conserved, and that men mowe have cause and matere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy, and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. For Senek seith 'he overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie' Wherfore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, to th'effect and entente that god almighty have mercy

sente a wyf of so greet d

Therefore were it better for you to lose an equal property of your own than to take theirs from them

lose his privilege who abuses and misuses the might and the power that are given to him' And I submit that even if you might impose upon them that pain by right and by law which I think that you could not I say that you might not be able to put it into execution by some chance, and then were you as likely to fall again into war as you were before Therefore if you would have men render you obedience you must judge more courteously that is to say you must give more easy sentences For it is written that He who most courteously commands men most readily obey Therefore I pray you that

shall not have cause to repent for what you have done For Seneca says He conquers but evilly who repents of his victory' Wherefore, I pray you let

When Melibee had heard the great arguments and

as I see and behold your great humility and that you are sorry and repentant for your crimes, it constrains me to show you grace

and mercy Therefore do I receive you into my grace and forgive you utterly all the offences, injuries, and

we have sinned against Him in this wretched world For doubtless, if we be sorry and repentant for the sins and crimes which we have committed in the sight of Our Lord He is so free and so merciful that He will forgive us our guilt and bring us into His everlasting bliss Amen "

doon yow grace and mercy Therfore I receyve yow to my grace, and foryeve yow outrely alle the offences, injuries, and wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne, to this effect and to this ende, that god of his endelees mercy wole at the tyme of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed to him in this wrecched world For doutelees, if we be sory and repentant of the sinnes and giltes whiche we han trespassed in the sighte of our lord god, he is so free and so merciable, that he wole foryeven us our giltes, and bringen us to his blisse that never hath ende Amen "

HERE IS ENDED CHAUCER'S TALE OF MELIBEUS AND OF DAME PRUDENCE

THE MONK'S PROLOGUE

THE MERRY WORDS OF THE HOST TO THE MONK

When ended was my tale of Melibee
And of Prudence and her benignity,
Our host remarked As I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*
I'd rather than a barrel of good ale
That my wife Goodlief could have heard this tale!
For she has no such patience, I ll avow,
As had this Melibeus Prudence, now
By God's own bones! When I do beat my knaves

Or happens to usurp her cherished place,
Why, she comes home and ramps right in my face,
Crying, 'False coward, go avenge your wife!
By *corpus* bones! Come let me have your knife,
And you shall take my distaff and go spin!'

And through the door anon I must take flight,

cheer,
For you shall tell a tale, and verily

When ended was my tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and hir benignitee,
Our hoste seyde, "as I am faithful man,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
I hadde lever than a barel ale
That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!
For she nis no-thing of swich pacience
As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence
By goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,
She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves,
And cryeth, 'slee the dogges everichoon,
And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon '
And if that any neighebor of myne
Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
Or be so hardy to hir to trespace,
Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face,
And cryeth, 'false coward, wreek thy wyf!
By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne!'
Fro day to night right thus she wol beginne,—
'Allas!' she seith, 'that ever I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape,
That wol be overlad with every wight!

Be lyk a wilde leoun fool hardy
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde,
For she is big in armes, by my feith,
That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or seith.
But lat us passe awey fro this matere.
My lord the Monk," quod he, "be mery of chere,
For ye shul telle a tale trewely.

Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!

Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of treding, and we borel men ben shrimpes!
Of feble trees ther comen wrecched impes
This maketh that our heires been so sclendre
And feble, that they may nat wel engendre.
This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye
Of Venus payements than mowe we,
God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!

Lo, Rochester is standing there hard by!

You are a master when you are at home.
No cloisterer or novice can you be
A wily governor you seem to me,
And therewithal a man of brawn and bone
A person of some consequence you've grown.
I pray that God confound the silly fool
That put you first in a religious school,
You would have been a hen hopper, all right!

Of one that stood in great prosperity
And is now fallen out of high degree
In misery, where he ends wretchedly

Each in his place, as men in writings find,
But I put some before and some behind,
As they to memory may come by chance,
Hold me excused, pray, of my ignorance."

After hir ages, as men writen finde,
But telle hem som bifore and som bihinde,
As it now comth un-to my remembraunce,
Have me excused of myn ignoraunce."

HERE IT ENDETH

THE MONK'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE MONK'S TALE OF THE FALLS OF FAMOUS MEN

I WILL bewail in manner of tragedy
The ills of those that stood in high degree
And fell so far there was no remedy

I WOL biwayle in maner of Tragedie
The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
To bringe hem out of hir adversitee,
For certein, whan that fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee,
Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

LUCIFER

With Lucifer, though he was angel fair
And not a man, with him will I begin,
For though Fortune may not an angel dare,
From high degree yet fell he for his sin
Down into Hell, and he lies yet therein
O Lucifer, brightest of angels all,
Now art thou Satan, and thou may'st not win
From misery wherein thou far did'st fall!

At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
And nat a man, at him I wol biginne,
For, thogh fortune may non angel dere,
From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne
Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.
O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat twinne
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

ADAM

Lo, Adam, in the garden Damascene,
By God Almighty's finger wrought was he,
And not begotten of man's sperm unclean,
He ruled all Paradise, except one tree

SAMPSON

Was never such another as was he
For body's strength, and therewith hardiness;
But to his wives he told his privity,
Whereby he slew himself for
wretchedness

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat
By th'angel, longe er his nativitee,
And was to god almighty consecrat,
And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte see.
Was never swich another as was he,
To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardinesse,
But to his wyves tolde he his secree,
Through which he slow him-self, for wrecched-
nesse.

pray
Till she his secret held, when she, untrue,
Unto his foes that secret did betray
And him forsook for other loves and new.

Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,
Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,
He slow and al to-rente the leoun,
Toward his wedding walking by the weye.
His false wyf coude him so plese and
preye
Til she his conseil knew, and she untrewe
Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwreye,
And him forsook, and took another newe.

Three hundred foxes took Sampson for ire,
And alle hir tayles he togider bond,
And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
For he on every tayl had knit a brond
And they brende alle the cornes in that lond,
And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek
A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
And had no wepen but an asses cheek

And all the olive trees and vines each one
A thousand men he slew with his own hand
With no weapon save an ass s jaw bone

Whan they were slayn, so thursted him that he
Was wel ny lorn, for which he gan to preye
That god wolde on his peyne han som pitee,
And sende him drinke, or elles moste he deye,
And of this asses cheke, that was dreye
Out of a wang tooth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he drank y nogh, shortly to seye,
Thus heelp him god as *Judicum* can telle

When they were slain he thirsted so that he
Was well nigh lost for which he prayed say I

By verray force at Gazan on a night,
Maugree Philistiens of that citee
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak y caried hem hath he
Hye on an hille that men mighte hem see.
O noble almighty Sampson leef and dere,
Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,
In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!

He hadde of Israel the governaunce
But sone shal he wepen many a tere,
For wommen shal him bringen to meschaunce!

This Samson never l quor drank nor wine
Nor on his head came razor nor a shear
Obeying thus the angel s word divine
For all his forces in his long locks were
And fully twenty winters year by year
He held of Israel the governance
But all too soon should he weep many a tear
For women should betray him to mischance!

Un to his lemman Dalida he tolde
That in his heres al his strengthe lay,
And falsly to his fo-men she him solde
And sleping in hir barme up-on a day

Delilah being his darling her he told
That in h s unshorn locks all his strength lay,
And him to foemen then she falsely sold

But er his heer were clipped or y shave,
Ther was no bond with which men might him binde
But now is he in prisoun in a cave
Wher as they made him at the querne grinde
O noble Sampson strongest of mankinde,
O whylom juge in glorie and in richesse,
Now maystow wepen with thyn yën blinde,
S th thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.

Before h s ha r was sheared and shaven close
There were no bonds wherev ith men might h m b nd

For thou from wealth art fallen to wretchedness.

Th ende of this caytif was as I shal seye

And down came roof and all and there it lay,
Killing himself and enemies each and all

And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay,
And slow him self, and eek his fo-men alle

That is to say those princes every one
And full three thousand others who were slain
By falling of that temple built of stone
To Samson now I'll not revert again
Be warned by this example old and plain
Men should not tell their business to their wives
In such things as of secrecy they're fain
And if it touch their limbs or touch their lives

This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,
And eek three thousand bodies wer ther slayn
With falling of the grete temple of stoon
Of Sampson now wol I na more seyn
Beth war by this ensample old and playn
That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,
If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves

HERCULES

Of Hercules the sovereign conquering power
Sing his deeds praise and sing his high renown
For in his time of strength he was the flower
He slew and made a lion's skin his own
Of centaurs laid he all the boastings down
He killed the cruel Harpies those birds fell
Brought golden apples from the dragon thrown
And he stole Cerberus, the hound of Hell.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour
Singen his workes laude and heigh renoun,
For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour
He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun,
He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun,
He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes felle,
He golden apples rafte of the dragoun,
He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle

He slew the cruel tyrant Busirus
And made his horses eat him flesh and bone
To a fiery venomous worm he wrote finis
Achelous had two horns but he broke one
Cacus he slew within his cave of stone
He slew the giant Anthaeus the strong
He killed the Erymanthian boar anon
And bore the heavens upon his shoulders long

He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,
And made his hors to frete him, flesh and boon,
He slow the firy serpent venimous
Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon
And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon
He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge,
He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,
And bar the heven on his nekke longe

Was never man, since this old world began
That slew so many monsters as did he
Throughout all earth's wide realms his honour ran
What of his strength and his high chivalry
And every kingdom went he out to see
He was so strong no man could hinder him
At both ends of the world, as says Trophy,
In lieu of limits he set pillars grim

Was never wight, sith that the world bigan,
That slow so many monstres as dide he
Thurgh-out this wyde world his name ran,
What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,
And every reaume wente he for to see
He was so strong that no man mighte him lette,
At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,
In stede of boundes, he a piler sette

A darling had this noble champion,
Deianira sweet as is the May
And as these ancient writers say each one
She sent to him a new shirt fresh and gay
Alas that shirt alas and welaway!
Envenomed was so cunningly withal
That ere he'd worn the thing but half a day
It made the flesh from off his bones to fall

A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
That highte Dianira, fresh as May,
And, as thise clerkes maken mencioun,
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay
Allas! this sherte, allas and weylaway!
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flesh al from his bones falle

Yet are there writers who do her excuse
Because of Nessus who the shirt had made
However it be I will not her accuse
But all his naked back this poison flayed
Until the flesh turned black and torn and frayed
And when he saw no other remedy
Upon a pyre of hot brands he was laid
For of no poison would he deign to die

But nathelees somme clerkes hir excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked,
Be as be may, I wol hir noght accusen,
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked,
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked
And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deyned him to dye

Thus died this mighty worthy Hercules.
Lo, who may trust to Fortune any throw?
And he who seeks on earth for fame and ease
Ere he's aware he's often brought down low

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules,
Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.

Ful wys is he that can him selven knowe
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to glose,
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor,
With tonge unnethe may discryved be
He twyës wan Jerusalem the citee,
The vessel of the temple he with him ladde
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde

The precious treasure and th mighty throne,

The Temple s vessels took he and was glad
And Babylon was the ancient sovereign see
Wherein his glory and delight he had

The fairest children of the blood royal
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral
Amonges othere Daniel was oon,
That was the wysest child of everichoon,
For he the dremes of the king expouned,
Wher as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes
  souned

The fairest children of the blood royal
Of Israel he gelded them anon
And made each ~~one of them to be his~~ thrall
Among the number Daniel thus was one,
Of all the youth the nation s wisest son
For he the dreams of the great king expounded
When in Chaldea wise clerk was here none
Who knew to what end those dreams were pro-
  pounded

This proude king leet make a statue of golde,
Sixty cubytes long and seven in brede,
To which image bothe yonge and olde
Comaunded he to loute, and have in drede,
Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede
He shal be brent, that wolde noght obeye
But never wolde assente to that dede
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye

But no assent to that whate er betide,
Would Daniel and his pair of comrades say

This king of kinges proud was and elaat,
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat
But sodeynly he loste his dignitee,
And lyk a beste him semed for to be,
And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute,
In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,
Til certein tyme was y come aboute

In rain and storm with all wild beasts walked he,
Until a certain time was come about.

And lyk an egles fetheres wexe his heres,
His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were,
Til god relessed him a certein yeres,
And yaf him wit, and than with many a tere
He thanked god, and ever his lyf in fere
Was he to doon amis, or more trespace,
And, til that tyme he leyd was on his bere,
He knew that god was ful of might and grace

BELSHAZZAR

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,
That heeld the regne after his fader day,
He by his fader coude nought be war,
For proud he was of herte and of array;
And eek an ydolastre was he ay
His hye estaat assured him in pryde
But fortune caste him doun, and ther he
  lay,
And sodeynly his regne gan divyde.

lay
And suddenly his kingdom did divide.

In all that land magician was there none

'He was cast out of human company,
With asses was his habitation known,

Over all realms and everything therein,
And then did God to him compassion own
And gave him back his kingdom and his kin

Drank from those sacred vessels sundry wines,
And praised false gods, and hailed them, wickedly,
Whereof toward you the wrath of God inclines.

"That hand was sent from God which on the wall

And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful faste,
For fere of which he quook and syked sore
This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste,
Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.

In al *that lond* magicien was noon

And him birafte the regne that he hadde.

He was out cast of mannes companye,
With asses was his habitacioun,
And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,
Til that he knew, by *grace* and by resoun,
That *god* of heven hath dominacioun
Over every regne and every creature;
And thanne had god of him compassioun,
And him restored his regne and his figure.

Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take
How that in lordshipe is no sikernesse,
For whan *fortune* wol a man forsake,
She bereth awey his regne and his richesse,
And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;
For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,
Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse
This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.

ZENOBIA

Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,
As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
So worthy was in armes and so kene,
That no wight passed hir in hardinesse,
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse
Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended,
I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,
But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.

Zenobia, of all Palmyra queen
(As write old Persians of her nobleness),
So mighty was in warfare, and so keen,
That no man her surpassed in hardiness,
Nor yet in lineage, nor in gentleness
Of blood of Persia's kings she was descended;
I say not she had greatest beauteousness,
But of her figure naught could be amended

From hir childhede I finde that she fledde
Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sente.
She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille
Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente,
And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille

From childhood on I find that she had fled
Duties of women, and to wildwood went;

She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the montaignes al the night,

And unto no man would she yield her hand

But atte laste hir frendes han hir maried
To Odenake, a prince of that contree,
Al were it so that she hem longe taried,
And ye shul understonde how that he
Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she.
But nathelees, whan they were knit infere,
They lived in joye and in felicitee,
For ech of hem hadde other leef and dere

But at the last her friends did make her marry
Odenathus, a prince of that country,
Albeit she long waited and did tarry,

Save o thing, that she never wolde assente
By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye
But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente
To have a child, the world to multiplye,
And al-so sone as that she mighte espye
That she was nat with childe with that dede,
Than wolde she suffre him doon his fantasye
Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.

But to one thing she never would consent,
For any prayers, that he should near her lie
Save one night only, when 'twas her intent
To have a child, since men should multiply,
Yet when she learned she'd got no pregnancy
From that night's work together on her bed,
Then would she suffer him again to try,
But only once indeed, and then with dread

And if she were with childe at thilke cast,
Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game

And when she was with child, all at the last,
Then no more might he play at that same game

Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,
The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure,
But now un-to our tale turne we.
I seye, so worshipful a creature,
And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible in the werre, and curteis eke,

And hardy in the field, and full daring,
Was not in all the world where men do dwell

Her rich array may not be rightly told,
Either of vessels or of fine clothing,
She was clad all in jewels and in gold,
And she did never cease, despite hunting,
To gain of divers tongues a full knowing,
Whenever she had time, she did intend
To learn from books, which were to her liking,
How she in virtue might her whole life spend

And briefly of this story now to treat,
So doughty was her husband, as was she,
That they two conquered many kingdoms great
Throughout the East, with many a fair city
That did pertain unto the majesty
Of Rome, and with strong hands they held them fast;
Nor might a foe escape by trying to flee
The while Odenathus' good days did last.

Her battles all (as whoso wills may read)
Against Sapor the king and others too
And all her story as it fell, indeed,
Why she was victor and had right thereto,
And, after, all her misfortune and woe,
How they besieged her and at last did take,
Let him unto my master Petrarch go,
Who wrote the whole of this, I undertake

Now when Odenathus was dead, then she
The kingdom held within her own strong hand;
Against her foes she fought so bitterly
There was no king or prince in all that land
But was right glad, if mercy make her bland,
That she turned not against him her array,
With her they made alliance bond and band,
To keep the peace and let her ride and play.

The emperor of Rome, one Claudius
(His predecessor, Galien too, that man),
Had never courage to oppose her thus,
Nor was Egyptian nor Armenian,
Nor Syrian, nor yet Arabian
That dared against her in the field to fight,
For fear that at her hands they might be slain,
Or by her army put to sudden flight

In kingly habit went her sons also,
As being heirs to their sire's kingdoms all,
Athenodorus and Thymalao
Their names were (or the Greeks did so them call)
But Fortune's honey is aye mixed with gall;
This mighty queen could no great while endure
And Fortune from her high throne made her fall
To wretchedness and into ways obscure.

Aurelian, when Roman governance
Came to his two strong hands, made no delay,
But swore that on this queen he'd wreak vengeance,
And so with mighty legions took his way

Ne more labour mighte in werre endure,
Was noon, thogh al this world men sholde seke.

Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told
As wel in vessel as in hir clothing,
She was al clad in perree and in gold,
And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunting,
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende
To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,
How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dispende

And, shortly of this storie for to trete,
So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In th'orient, with many a fair citee,
Apertenaunt un-to the magestee
Of Rome, and with strong hond helde hem ful faste;
Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem flee,
Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste

Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to rede,
Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo,
And how that al this proces fil in dede,
Why she conquered and what title had therto,
And after of hir meschief and hir wo,
How that she was biseged and y-take,
Let him un-to my maister Petrark go,
That writ y-nough of this, I undertake

When Odenake was deed, she mightily
The regnes heeld, and with hir propre honde
Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,
That ther nas king ne prince in al that londe
That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde,
That she ne wolde up-on his lond werreye,
With hir they made alliaunce by bonde
To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and pleye.

The emperour of Rome, Claudius,
Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,
Ne dorste never been so corageous,
Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
Within the feld that dorste with hir fighte
Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes slen
Or with hir meynee putten hem to flighte

In kinges habit wente hir sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Hermanno, and Thymalaō
Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
This mighty quene may no whyl endure.
Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
To wrecchednesse and to misaventure.

Aurelian, whan that the governaunce
Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,
He shoop up-on this queen to do vengeaunce,
And with his legiouns he took his weye

Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye,
He made hir flee, and atte laste hir hente,
And fettred hir, and eek hir children tweye,
And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome he wente

Among the other booty Asian
Her chariot was of gold and jewellery
And this great Roman this Aurelian
He carried it away for men to see
Before his car in triumph then walked she
With golden chains upon her neck hang ng
Crowned was she too to show her high degree
And full of priceless gems was her clothing

Allas fortune! she that whylom was
Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth al the peple on hir allas!
And she that helmed was in starke stoures,
And wan by force tounes stronge and toures,
Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte,
And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte

Alas Fortune! She that but lately was
The scourge of kings and emperors and powers
Now may the rabble gape at her alas!
And she that armed rode where grim battle lowers
And took by force great cities and strong towers
Must wear a cap now while her two eyes weep
And she that bore the sceptre of carved flowers
May bear a distaff and thus earn her keep

NERO

Al though that Nero were as vicious
As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,
Yet he as telleth us Swetonius
This wyde world hadde in subjeccioun,
Both Est and West, South and

Though viciousness had Nero in overplus
As ever fiend that s low in torment thrown
Yet he as tells us old Suetonius,
Th s whole wide world held subject aye, did own,
East west south north wherever Rome was
kno vn
Of rub es sapphires and of great pearls white
Were all his garments broidered up and down
For he in jewels greatly did delight

More delicat, more pompous of array,
More proud was never emperour than he,
That lyk

More delicate more pompous of array
More proud was never emperor than he

H s lustes were al lawe in his decree,
For fortune as his freend him wolde obeye

For Fortune was his friend and would obey

He Rome brende for his delicacye,
The sen

He burned Rome for his del cate profligacy
Some senators he slew upon a day
Only to learn how men might weep and cry

No tere out of his yën for that sighte
Ne cam but seyde, a fair womman was she"
Gret

And drank anon no other s gn he made
When m ght is wedded unto cruelty
Alas too deep its venom will pervade!

Whan might is joyned un to crueltee,
Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,

A master had in youth this emperor,

[illegible]

That ere could tempt him vice or tyranny
Was it is said, the length of many days

To teche him letterure and curteisye,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye,
And whyl this maister hadde of him maistrye,
He maked him so conning and so souple
That longe tyme it was er tirannye
Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple

This Seneca of whom I do apprise
By reason Nero held him in such dread
Since he for vices spared not to chastise
Discreetly though by word and not by deed—
Sir would he say an emperor must need
Be virtuous and hate all tyranny —
For which in bath did Nero make him bleed
From both his arms until he had to die

This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
By cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,
For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse
Discreetly as by worde and nat by dede,—
"Sir," wolde he seyn, "an emperour moot nede
Be vertuous, and hate tirannye"—
For which he in a bath made him to blede
On bothe his armes, til he moste dye

[illegible]

Nevertheless this Seneca the wise
Chose in a bath to die as you did hear
Rather than suffer in some other guise
And thus did Nero slay his master dear

This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce
In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,
Which afterward him thoughte a greet grevaunce,
Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse
But natheles this Seneca the wyse
Chees in a bath to deye in this manere
Rather than han another tormentyse,
And thus hath Nero slayn his maister dere

Now it befell that Fortune cared no longer
To Nero's high pride to be accomplice
For though he might be strong yet she was
stronger
[illegible]

Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger
The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce,
For though that he were strong, yet was she
strenger,
She thoughte thus, "by god, I am to nyce
To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce
In heigh degree, and emperour him calle
By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce,
When he leest weneth, sonest shal he falle"

The people rose against him on a night,
For all his faults and when he it espied
[illegible]
And went his way, nor longer dared to call

The peple roos up-on him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it espyed,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed,
He knokked faste, and ay, the more he cryed,
The faster shette they the dores alle,
Tho wiste he wel he hadde him self misgyed,
And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle

The people cried and rumbled up and down
And having ears he heard the thing they said
Where's this false tyrant Nero, where's he flown?'
For fear almost out of his wits he strayed
And to his gods then piously he prayed
For succour but no help might him betide
For fear of this he wished himself unmade,
And ran into a garden, there to hide

The peple cryde and rombled up and doun,
That with his eres herde he how they seyde,
'*Wher is this false tyraunt, this Neroun?*'
For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,
And to his goddes pitously he preyde
For socour, but it mighte nat bityde
For drede of this, him thoughte that he deyde,
And ran in to a gardin, him to hyde.

[illegible]

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,
And to thise cherles two he gan to preye
To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
[illegible]

OF HOLOFERNES

Was never capitayn under a king
That regnes mo putte in subjeccioun,
Ne strenger was in feeld of alle thing,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun
Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde him up and doun
Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste

shown,
Than Holofernes, whom Dame Fortune kissed
Right lecherously, and led him up and down
Until his head was off before 'twas missed

Nat only that this world hadde him in awe
For lesinge of richesse or libertee,
But he made every man reneye his lawe.
"Nabugodonosor was god," seyde he,
"Noon other god sholde adoured be."
Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee,
Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.

Save in Bethulia, a strong city,
Where Eliachim priest was of the land

But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;
Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,
With inne his tente, large as is a bern,

But from the death of Holofernes learn
Amidst his host he lay drunk, on a night,
Within his tent, as large as ever barn,
And yet, for all his pomp and all his might,
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright,
Sleeping, smote off his head and from his tent
Stole secretly away every wight,
And with the head to her own town she went

OF THE FAMOUS KING ANTIOCHUS

What nedeth it of King Anthiochus
To telle his hye royal magestee,
His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?
For swich another was ther noon as he.

And now he fell from high prosperity,
And on a hill how wretchedly lay dead

Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde
That verraily he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde,
And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the flodes of the see restrayne
And goddes peple hadde he most in hate,
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wening that god ne mighte his pryde abate.

Fortune had so enhanced the man's great pride
That verily he thought he might attain
Unto the utter stars on every side,

And for that Nichanor and Thimothee
Of Jewes weren venquisshed mightily,
Unto the Jewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wolde eft-sone,
To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly,
But of his purpos he was let ful sone.

And because Nicanor and Timothy
Were vanquished by the Jews so mightily,
Unto all Jews so great a hate had he
That he bade bring his chariot hastily,

God for his manace him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable,
That in his guttes carf it so and boot
That his peynes weren importable.

And certainly the thing was *reasonable*,
For many a man's guts he had caused to pain,
But from his purpose, cursed damnable,
In spite of all he would not him restrain

And certeinly, the wreche was resonable,
For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne,
But from his purpos cursed and dampnable
For al his smert he wolde him nat restreyne;

[illegible]

But bad anon apparaillen his host,
And sodeynly, er he of it was war,
God daunted al his pryde and al his bost.
For he so sore fil out of his char,
That it his limes and his skin to-tar,
So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,
But in a chayer men aboute him bar,
Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.

That from his very bones the flesh did tear,
So that he might not either walk or ride,
But in a litter men were forced to bear
Him with them, bruised upon the back and side

The wrath of God smote him so cruelly
That through his body loathsome maggots crept,
And therewithal he stank so horribly
That none of those that round his person kept,
[illegible]

[illegible]
Ne mighte noght for *stink* of him endure.
In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte,
And knew god lord of every creature.

To all his host and to himself also
Full loathsome was his carrion, one great blain;
There were no men could bear him to and fro
And in this stink and in this horrid pain
He died full wretchedly on a mountain
Thus had this robber and this *homicide*
Who made so many men weep and complain,
Such guerdon as belongs to too great pride

To al his host and to him-self also
[illegible]

OF ALEXANDER

Alexander's tale is so well known a tune
That everyone who is not simple grown
Has heard somewhat, or all, of his fortune
This whole wide world, to state conclusion known,
He won by strength, or else for his renown
Right gladly men to sue for peace did send
The pride of man and beast he tumbled down
Where'er he went, and that was the world's end

The storie of Alisaundre is so comune,
That every wight that hath discrecioun
Hath herd somwhat or al of his fortune.
This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun
They weren glad for pees un-to him sende
The pryde of man and beste he leyde adoun,
Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende

Comparison might never yet be staked
[illegible]
Save wine and women, nothing might assuage
His high intent in arms, all men must cower,
So filled he was of leonine courage

Comparisoun might never yit be maked
Bitwixe him and another conquerour,
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked,
He was of knighthode and of fredom flour;
Fortune him made the heir of hir honour,
Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte aswage
His hye entente in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonyn corage

What praise were it to him though 'gain were told
Darius' tale or of others brought low—
Of kings and dukes and earls and princes bold,
The which he conquered and brought down to woe?
[illegible]

What preys were it to him, though I yow tolde
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo?
I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,
The world was his, what sholde I more devyse?
For though I write or tolde you evermo
Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse

Twelve years he reigned, as tells us Maccabee,

Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee;

Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,
That first was king in Grece the contree
O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!
That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!
Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were,
Thy sys fortune hath turned into *as*,
And yit for thee ne weep she never a tere!

And yet for you she never wept a tear!

Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of fraunchyse,
That al the world welded in his demeyne,
And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffyse?
So ful was his corage of heigh empryse
Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poison to despyse,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte?

Who shall give me the tears now to complain
For death of gentle blood and high franchise?

OF JULIUS CAESAR

And un to Rome made hem tributarie,
And s tthe of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune wex his adversarie

By wisdom manhood and by great labour,
From humble bed to royal majesty
Up rose he Julius the conqueror
Who won the Occident by land and sea
By force of arms or else by clear treaty
And unto Rome made all this tributary,
And then of Rome the emperor was he
Till Fortune came to be his adversary

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye
Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe,
That of th'orient hadde al the chivalrye
As fer as that the day biginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou puttest al th'orient in awe
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee speddel

O mighty Caesar who in Thessaly
Against great Pompey father of yours in law,
That of the East had all the chivalry
From farthest places that the sun e er saw
You by your knighthood broke them for death s ma v
Save those few men who thence with Pompey fled
Whereby you put the Orient in awe
Thank Fortune now that you so well have sped

But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille,
I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour
Of Julius and him the heed he broghte
Allas, Pompey, of th'orient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghtel

But now a little while I well bewail

To Rome ageyn repaireth Julius
With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye
Ageins this Julius, in subtil wyse,
And cast the place, in whiche he sholde dye
With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse

To Rome aga n repaired great Julius
To have his triumph laureate full high
But on a time Brutus and Cassius
Who ever had of great estate envy
Full secretly did lay conspiracy
Aga nst this Julius in subtle wise
And fixed the place at which he soon should die
By dagger thrusts as I shall you apprise

This Julius to the Capitolie wente

die

But never groaned he save at one stroke no
(Or two perchance) unless his legend lie.

But never gronte he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at two, but if his storie lye

So *manly* was this Julius in his heart
And so well loved he stately decency
That though his deadly wounds did burn and smart
His mantle yet about his hips cast he
That no man there should see his privity
And as he lay there dying in a trance
And knew that he was dying verily
Of decency yet had he remembrance

So manly was this Julius at herte
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,
That, though his deedly woundes sore smerte,
His mantel over his hippes casteth he,
For no man sholde seen his privitee
And, as he lay on deying in a traunce,
And wiste verraily that deed was he,
Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce

Lucan to tell this story I commend
Suetonius too *Valerius also*
Who of the tale have written to the end
And told how of these mighty conquerors two
Fortune was first the friend and then the foe
No man may trust in Fortune s favour long
But as one fearing ambush must he go
Witness the end of all these conquerors strong

Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
And to Sweton, and to Valerie also,
That of this storie wryten word and ende,
How that to thise grete conqueroures two
Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo
No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
But have hir in awayt for ever mo
Witnesse on alle thi,e conqueroures stronge

CROESUS

The wealthy Croesus Lydia s sometime king
Of which Croesus King Cyrus had such dread
Yet was he taken in his pride swelling
And to be burned upon a pyre was led
But such a rain down from the clouds was shed
As quenched the fire and let h m there escape
But to be warned no grace was in him spread
Till Fortune on the gallows made him gape

This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
Yit was he caught amiddes al his pryde,
And to be brent men to the fyr him ladde
But swich a reyn doun fro the welkne shadde
That slow the fyr, and made him to escape,
But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape

When he d escaped not changed was his intent

And then a vis on in the night he met
At which he waxed so proud and grew so fain
That upon vengeance all his heart was set

Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente
For to biginne a newe werre agayn
He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn,
And eek a sweven up on a night he mette,
Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,
That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette

And to his daughter who stood there beside
And well he knew in knowledge did abound
He bade interpret what it signified
And she h s dream in this wise did expound

Up-on a tree he was, as that him thoughte,
Ther Juppiter him wesh, bothe bak and syde,
And Phebus eek a fair towaille him broughte
To drye him with, and ther for wex his pryde,
And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,
Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde

The tree she said the gallows is to mean
And Jupiter betokens snow and rain
While Phoebus with his towel white and clean

'The tree,' quod she, the galwes is to mene,
And Juppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn,
Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, certeyn,
Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye";
Thus warned she him ful plat and ful pleyn,
His doughter, which that called was Phanye

So hanged was Croesus, that proud Lydian king
His royal throne could nothing then avail
Tragedy is no other kind of thing

Anhanged was Cresus, the proude king,
His royal trone mighte him nat availle —
Tragedie is noon other maner thing,

Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,
But for that fortune alwey wol assaille
With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude,
For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille
And covere hir brighte face with a cloude

Nor can the singer cry aught or bewail
But that Dame Fortune always will assail
W th unwarned stroke those great ones who are proud
For when men trust her most then will she fail
And cover her bright face as with a cloud

OF KING PEDRO OF SPAIN

[illegible]

And after, at a sege by subtiltee,
Thou were bitrayed and lad un to his tente,
Wher as he with his owene hond slow thee,
Succeding in thy regne and in thy rente

O noble Pedro glory once of Spain
Whom Fortune held so high in majesty
Well ought men read thy piteous death with pain!
Out of thy land thy brother made thee flee
And later at a siege by scheme crafty
Thou wert betrayed and led into his tent
Where he then and with his own hand slew thee,
Succeeding to thy realm and government

The feeld of snow, with th'egle of blak ther-inne,[1]
[illegible]

The field of snow with eagle black therein [1]
Caught by the l me rod coloured as the gleed,
He bre ved this wickedness and all this sin
The Wicked Nest [2] was worker of this deed,
Not that Charles Oliver who aye took heed
Of truth and honour but the Armorican
Ganelon Oliver corrupt for mead
Brought low this worthy king by such a plan

OF KING PETER OF CYPRUS

[illegible]

O noble Peter Cyprus lord and king
[illegible]
And thus does Fortune s wheel turn treacherously
And out of happiness bring men to sorrow

OF BERNABO OF LOMBARDY

Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,
God of delyt and scourge of Lumbardye
Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte,
Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye
For he thy nevew was and sone in lawe,
With inne his prisoun made thee to dye,
But why ne how, noot I that thou were slawe

Of Milan great Bernabo Visconti
God of delight and scourge of Lombardy
[illegible]
With n his priso shut thee up to d e
But I know not ho v death to thee d d draw

OF UGOLINO, COUNT OF PISA

Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
Ther may no tonge telle for pitee,
But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,
And with him been his litel children three
The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age
Allas fortune! it was greet crueltee
Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!

Of Ugolino Count of Pisa s woe
No tongue can tell the half for hot pity
Near Pisa stands a to ver and it was so
[illegible]

Dampned [illegible]

Condemned was he to d e in that prison
S nce Ruggieri Pisa s b shop twice
Had l ed intrigued and egged old passions on,
Whereby the people d d against him rise

[1] The arms of Bertrand du Guesclin
[2] Chaucer puts this for OF *mau ni* meaning thereby Sir Oliver Mauny

And thrust him into prison in such wise
As you have heard and meat and drink he had
So little that it could not long suffice
And was moreover, very poor and bad

And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse
As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde
So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse,
And therwith al it was ful povre and badde

And on a day befell it at the hour
When commonly to him his food was brought,
The gaoler shut the great doors of the tower

And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
The gayler shette the dores of the tour
He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,
And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,
That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen
'Allas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was wroght!'
Therwith the teres fillen from his yēn

His youngest son who three years was of age,
Unto him said Father why do you weep?
When will the gaoler bring us our pottage?
Is there no crumb of bread that you did keep?

His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age,
Un to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,
Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry that I may nat slepe
Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!
Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe,
Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever"

Thus day by day this little child did cry,
Till on his father s breast at length he lay
And said Farewell my father I must die
And kissed the man and died that very day
And when the father saw it dead I say
For grief his arms gnawed he until blood came
And said Alas Fortune and welaway
It is thy treacherous wheel that I must blame!

Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,
And seyde, 'far wel, fader, I moot dye,"
And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day
And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
And seyde, "allas, fortune! and weylaway!
Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'

His children thought that it for hunger was
He gnawed h s arms and not that twas for woe
And cried O father do not thus alas!
But rather eat our young flesh even so
This flesh you gave us take it back and go
And eat enough! 'Twas thus those children cried
And after that within a day or two
They laid themselves upon his knees and died

His children wende that it for hunger was
That he his armes gnow, and nat for wo,
And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, allas!
But rather eet the flesh upon us two,
Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro
And eet y nough' right thus they to him seyde,
And after that, with in a day or two,
They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde

Himself despairing all by hunger starved
Thus ended this great count of Pisa s cries
All his vast riches Fortune from him carved

Him self, despeired, eek for hunger starf,
Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse,
From heigh estaat fortune awey him carf
Of this Tragedie it oghte y nough suffyse
Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
That highte Dant, for he can al devyse
Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille

HERE ENDETH THE TRAGEDY

HERE STINTETH THE KNIGHT THE MONK OF HIS TALE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

[illegible] this,

Ye seye right sooth, this monk, he clappeth loude,
He spak how 'fortune covered with a cloude'
I noot never what, and als of a 'Tragedie'
Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne

[illegible]

[illegible] any thing shal wel reported be
Sir [illegible]

And seyde [illegible]

[illegible] bene,
If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene,
Look that thyn herte be mery evermo"
"Yis, sir," quod he, "yis, host, so mote I go,
But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed".—

Hold!" cried the knight "Good sir, no more of this,
What you have said is right enough, and is
Very much more, a little heaviness

[illegible]

To hear about their sudden fall, alas!
But the contrary's joy and great solace,

[illegible]

great bell,
You say the truth, this monk, his clapper's loud
He spoke how 'Fortune covered with a cloud'
I know not what, and of a 'tragedy,'
As now you heard, and gad! no remedy
It is to wail and wonder and complain
That certain things have happened and it's pain,

[illegible]

lean?
If he but serves you, why, don't care a bean,
Just see your heart is always merry So"
"Yes sir," said he, "yes, host, so may I go,
For, save I'm merry, I know I'll be blamed"

And right away his story has he framed,
And thus he said unto us, every one,
This dainty priest, this goodly man, Sir John

And right anon his tale he hath attamed,
And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
This swete preest, this goodly man, sir John.

HERE IT ENDETH

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE OF THE COCK AND HEN, CHANTECLEER AND PERTELOTE

Of sharp sauce, why she needed no great deal,
For dainty morsel never passed her throat,
Her diet well accorded with her coat
Repletion never made this woman sick,

And no wine drank she, either white or red,
Her board was mostly garnished, white and black,
With milk and brown bread, whereof she'd no lack,
Broiled bacon and sometimes an egg or two,
For a small dairy business did she do
A yard she had enclosed all roundabout
With pales, and there was a dry ditch without,
And in the yard a cock called Chanticleer
In all the land, for crowing, he'd no peer
His voice was merrier than the organ gay

Of equinoctial value in that town,
For when fifteen degrees had been ascended,
Then crew he so it might not be amended

Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel and hir rente,
By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle,
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte,
Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote
Repleccioun ne made hir never syk,
Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce
The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce,
N'apoplexye shente nat hir heed,
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed,
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
In al the land of crowing nas his peer
His vois was merier than the mery orgon

For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed, as it were a castel-wal
His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon,
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote

Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith
But such a joye was it to here hem singe,

And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast and seyde, ' O herte dere
What eyleth yow to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper fy for shame!
And he answerde and seyde thus, ' madame

Yet of his look for fere almost I deye,
This caused me my groning doutelees '
Avoy! quod she, ' fy on yow, herteleesl
Allas! ' quod she, for by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love,
I can nat love a coward by my feith
For certes what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree and no nigard ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No-thing, god wot but vanitee, in sweven is
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight

Courteous she was discreet and debonnaire
Companionable, and she had been so fair
Since that same day when she was seven nights old
That truly she had taken the heart to hold
Of Chanticleer locked in her every limb
He loved her so that all was well with him
But such a joy it was to hear them sing
Whenever the bright sun began to spring
In sweet accord My love walks through the land
For at that time and as I understand
The beasts and all the birds could speak and sing
So it befell that in a bright dawning
As Chanticleer midst wives and sisters all
Sat on his perch the which was in the hall
And next him sat the winsome Pertelote

I pray you that you take it not in grief
By God I dreamed I d come to such mischief

With black unl ke the rest as it appears
H s snout was small and gleaming was each eye
Remembering ho v he looked almost I die
And all th s caused my groaning I confess
Aha said she fie on you spiritless!
Alas! cried she for by that God above
Now have you lost mv heart and all my love
I cannot love a co vard by my faith
For truly whatsoever woman saith
We all desire if only it may be
To l ave a husband hardy w se and free
And trustworthv no niggard and no fool
Nor one that is afraid of every tool

Of other humours could I tell also,

Now, sir," said she, "when we fly from the
beams,

And on this farm there's *no apothecary*,
I will *myself go find* some herbs for you
That will be good for health and pecker too,
And in our own yard all these herbs I'll find,
The which have properties of proper kind

lore.

Of many a man more an authority
That ever Cato was, pray pardon me,
Who say just the reverse of his sentence,
And have found out by long experience
That dreams, indeed, are good significations,
As much of joys as of all tribulations
That folk endure here in this life present.
There is no need to make an argument,
The very proof of this is shown indeed
"One of the greatest authors that men read
Says thus That on a time two comrades went
On pilgrimage, and all in good intent,
And it so chanced they came into a town
Where there was such a crowding, up and down,
Of people, and so little *harbourage*,
That they found not so much as one cottage
Wherein the two of them might sheltered be.
Wherefore they must, as of necessity,

Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes?
Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee fro the
bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf,
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow, and for ye shul nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow;
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
Of lauriol, centaure, and *fumetere*,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis,
Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth no dreem, I can say yow namore"
"Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy* of your
lore
But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By god, men may in olde bokes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
That al the revers seyn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument,

And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe might y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,

[illegible], as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe,
Bihold my blody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn',
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way,
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,

Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse,

What sholde I more un to this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to
grounde,

For that one night at least, part company,
And each went to a different hostelry
And took such lodgment as to him did fall
Now one of them was lodged within a stall,
Far in a yard, with oxen of the plow,
That other man found shelter fair enow,

And then again, while sleeping, thus dreamed he
And then a third time came a voice that said
(Or so he thought) 'Now, comrade, I am
dead,
Behold my bloody wounds, so wide and deep!

For on the morrow, soon as it was day,
Unto his comrade's inn he took the way,
And when he'd come into that ox's stall,
Upon his fellow he began to call.
The keeper of the place replied anon,
And said he 'Sir, your friend is up and gone,

A dung cart on its way to dumping ground,
And it was just the same in every wise
As you have heard the dead man advertise,

'That ought to keep the peace in this city
Alas, alas, here lies my comrade slain!'
"Why should I longer with this tale detain?
The people rose and turned the cart to
ground,

Murder will out, we see it every day

[illegible]

Immediately the rulers of that town,
They took the carter and so sore they racked
Him and the host, until their bones were cracked,
That they confessed their wickedness anon,
And hanged they both were by the neck, and soon.
"Here may men see that dreams are things to dread
And certainly, in that same book I read,

[illegible]

best
Jolly and glad they went unto their rest
And were prepared right early for to sail,
But unto one was told a marvelous tale
For one of them, a sleeping as he lay,
Did dream a wondrous dream ere it was day,
He thought a strange man stood by his bedside
And did command him, he should there abide,
And said to him 'If you tomorrow wend,

[illegible]

I do not care a straw for your dreamings,
For visions are but fantasies and japes
Men dream, why, every day, of owls and apes,
And many a wild phantasm therewithal,
Men dream of what has never been, nor shall
But since I see that you will here abide,
And thus forgo this fair wind and this tide,
God knows I'm sorry, nevertheless good day!'
"And thus he took his leave and went his way.
But long before the half his course he'd sailed,
I know not why, nor what it was that failed,
But casually the vessel's bottom rent,
And ship and men under the water went,
In sight of other ships were there beside
The which had sailed with that same wind and tide.

[illegible]

Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To god, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be,
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.

[illegible]

And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
Here may men seen that dremes been to drede
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe nat, so have I joye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an havensyde
But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste
Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille,
But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille

[illegible]

I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and japes
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal,
Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal

[illegible]

Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;

Of any dreem, so holy was his herte
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte

[illegible] dremes any vanitee

[illegible]ay rede of dremes many a wonder thing
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree
Which signified he sholde anhanged be?
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente in to bataille,

And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee, and I seye forther more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel,
I hem defye, I love hem never a del
  Now let us speke of mirthe and stinte al this,
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace,
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen,
For also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio,
Madame the sentence of this Latin is—
Womman is mannes joye and al his blis
For whan I fele a night your softe syde,

From treason but he was but seven years old
And therefore twas but little he'd been told
Of any dream so holy was his heart
By God! I'd rather than retain my shirt
That you had read this legend as have I
Dame Pertelote I tell you verily
Macrobius who wrote of Scipio

In the Old Testament at Daniel
Whether he held dreams for mere vanity
Read too of Joseph and you there shall see
Where dreams have sometimes been (I say not all)
Warnings of things that after did befall
Consider Egypt's king Dan Pharaoh
His baker and his butler these also
Whether they knew of no effect from dreams

She dreamed upon the very night before
That Hector's life should be lost evermore

Upon this I but say concluding here
That from this vision I have cause to fear
Adversity and I say furthermore
That I do set by laxatives no store
For they are poisonous I know it well
Them I defy and love not truth to tell
  But let us speak of mirth and stop all this
My lady Pertelote on hope of bliss

For there is truth in *In principio*
Mulier est hominis confusio
(Madam the meaning of this Latin is
Woman is man's delight and all his bliss)
For when I feel at night your tender side
Although I cannot then upon you ride

Forty degrees and one, and somewhat more

But suddenly he fell in grievous case,

And mark it down as sovereign in degree
Now every wise man, let him hark to me
This tale is just as true, I undertake,
As is the book of *Launcelot of the Lake*,
Which women always hold in such esteem

That same night, breaking through the hedge, had got

So says the best opinion of the clerks.

For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Royal he was, he was namore aferd,
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture,
And after wol I telle his aventure.
  Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat more,
And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
"The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas "
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas,
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo
God woot that worldly joye is sone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This stone is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
  A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire,

O newe Scariot, newe Genilon!
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.

But I ne can not bulte t to the bren
As can the holy doctour Augustyn
Or Boëce or the b shop Bradwardyn
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing
(Nedely clepe I simple necess tee)
Or elles if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing or do it noght
Though god forwoot it er that t was
  wroght
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necess tee condicionel
I wol not han to do of sw ch matere

I can noon harm of no womman divyne —
  Faire in the sond to bathe hir merily
Lyth Pertelote and alle hir sustres by
Agayn the sonne and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see
Fo Ph

As man that was affrayed in his herte
For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie if he may t see
Though he never erst had seyn t w th his yë.
  Th s Ch

e were worse than a feend
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye
I am nat come your counse l for t espye
But trewely the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe
For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
As eny aungel hath that s n hevene
Therw th ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boëce or any that can singe
My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!)
And eek your moder of hir gentilesse

W tness some cler c perfect for h s wo ks

As can the holy Docto August ne
Or Boeth us, or B shop Bradwa dine

Or f His knowing constra ns never at all
Save by necess ty cond tional
I have no part n matte s so austere

Pass over I but said n t my game

  All n the sand a bathing mer ily
Lay Pertelo e with all her s te s by
There in the sun and Chant clee so f ee
Sang me r er than a merma d n the sea
(Fo Phys ologus says certa nly
That they *do* s ng both well and me ily)
And so befell that as he cast his eye

F om any enemy that he may see

Ar you a a u o e who an y u friend?
Now su ely I were wo se than any fiend
If I should do you harm o v lla ny

Save you, I never heard a man so sing
As did your father in the grey dawning,
Truly 'twas from the heart, his every song

Stretching his neck till it grew long and small
And such discretion, too, by him was shown,
There was no man in any region known
That him in song or wisdom could surpass
I have well read, in *Dan Burnell the Ass*,
Among his verses, how there was a cock,
Because a priest's son gave to him a knock
Upon the leg, while young and not yet wise,
He caused the boy to lose his benefice
But, truly, there is no comparison
With the great wisdom and the discretion
Your father had, or with his subtlety
Now sing dear sir, for holy charity,
See if you can your father counterfeit"
   This Chanticleer his wings began to beat,
As one that could no treason there espy,
So was he ravished by this flattery.
   Alas, you lords! Full many a flatterer
Is in your courts, and many a cozener,
That please your honours much more, by my fay,
Than he that truth and justice dares to say

And by the gorget grabbed our Chanticleer,
Flung him on back, and toward the wood did steer,
For there was no man who as yet pursued
O destiny, you cannot be eschewed!
Alas, that Chanticleer flew from the beams!
Alas, his wife recked nothing of his dreams!

More for delight than cocks to multiply,
Why would'st thou suffer him that day to die?

Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese,
And certes, sire ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
As dide your fader in the morweninge,
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him, that with bothe his yën
He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte Charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?"
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
   Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye,
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
   This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos,
Streching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones,
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred,[1] dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chyde, as diden ye?
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
   Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun

[1]Gaufred de Vinsauf.

Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd
When he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,

That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir selven with a stedfast herte

Now wol I torne to my tale agayn —
This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden

They yelleden as feendes doon in helle,
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle,
The gees for fere flowen over the trees
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees,
So hidous was the noyse a! *benedicite!*
Certes

And therwithal thay shryked and they houped
It semed as that heven sholde falle
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak
In al his drede, un to the fox he spak,
And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
Now am I come un to this wodes syde,
Maugree your heed the cok shal heer abyde,
I wol him ete in feith and that anon' —
The fox answerde in feith, it shal be don' —

break
They yelled as very fiends do down in Hell
The ducks they cried as at the butcher fell

pooped
And therewithal they screamed and shrieked and whooped
It seemed as if the heaven itself should fall!

[1] One of the leaders in Wat Tyler's rebellion 1381

And as he spoke that word, all suddenly

Come down, and I will tell you what I meant
I'll tell the truth to you, God help me so!'
"Nay then," said he, "beshrew us both, you know,
But first, beshrew myself, both blood and bones,
If you beguile me, having done so once,
You shall no more, with any flattery,

chance
Who is so indiscreet in governance
He chatters when he ought to hold his peace."
Lo, such it is when watch and ward do cease,
And one grows negligent with flattery
But you that hold this tale a foolery,
As but about a fox, a cock a hen,
Yet do not miss the moral my good men
For Saint Paul says that all that's written well
Is written down some useful truth to tell
Then take the wheat and let the chaff lie still
And now, good God, and if it be Thy will,
As says Lord Christ, so make us all good men
And bring us into His high bliss Amen

HERE IS ENDED

And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
"Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow," quod he, "y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,

two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!"
"Nay," quod the fox, "but god yeve him mes-
chaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees."
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men.
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.

EPILOGUE TO THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

Sir nun's priest," said our host, and that anon,
"Now blessed be your breech and every stone!
This was a merry tale of Chanticleer

And many more than seven times seventeen
For see what muscles has this noble priest,
So great a neck and such a splendid chest!
He's got a hawk's fierce fire within his eye,
And certainly he has no need to dye

"Sir Nonnes Preest," our hoste seyde anoon,
"Y-blessed by thy breche, and every stoon!
This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer

THE SECOND NUN'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE SECOND NUN'S TALE

Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.

And though men dradden never for to dye,
Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,
That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,
Of which ther never comth no good encrees,
And seen, that slouthe hir holdeth in a lees
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren al that othere swinke

And though men never dreaded they must die,
Yet men see well, by reason, idleness
Is nothing more than rotten sluggardry,
Whereof comes never good one may possess,
And see sloth hold her in a leash, no less,
Only to sleep and eat and always drink
And to absorb all gain of others' swink

And for to putte us fro swich ydelnesse,
That cause is of so greet
confusioun,
I have heer doon my feithful bisinesse,
After the legende, in translacioun
Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,
Thou with thy gerland wroght of rose and lilie,
Thee mene I, mayde and martir, seint Cecilie!

And so, to save us from such idleness
Through which great trouble and distress have
grown,
I have here done my faithful busyness,
Translating the old legend, to make known
All of that glorious life which was thine own,
Thou ever with the rose and lily crowned,
Cecilia, for virtues high renowned

Invocation to Mary

And thou that flour of virgines art alle,
Of whom that Bernard list so wel to wryte,
To thee at my biginning first I calle,
Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endyte
Thy maydens deeth, than wan thurgh hir meryte
The eternal lyf, and of the feend victorie,
As man may after reden in hir storie

Thou mayde and mooder, doghter of thy sone,
Thou welle of mercy, sinful soules cure,

Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydes
Took mannes shap the eternal love and pees,
That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is,
Whom erthe and see and heven, out of relees,
Ay herien, and thou, virgin wemmelees,

Bore of Thy body—and wert kept a maid—
The mighty God Who every creature made.

Assembled is in Thee magnificence,
With mercy, goodness, and with such pity
That Thou, Who art the sun of excellence,
Not only keepest those that pay to Thee,
But oftentimes, of Thy benignity,
Freely, or ever men Thy help beseech,
Thou goest before and art their spirits' leech

Now help Thou meek and blessed, Thou fair Maid,
Me banished wretch, in wilderness of gall,
Think how the Canaanitish woman said
That even dogs may eat of the crumbs all
Which from the master's laden table fall,
And though I, now, unworthy son of Eve,
Am sinful, yet accept me, who believe

And since all faith is dead divorced from works,
That I may do the right, O give me space
To free me from that darkness of deep murks!
O Thou, Who art so fair and full of grace,
Be Thou my advocate in that high place
Where without ever end is sung "Hosanna,"
Thou, Mother of Christ and daughter of Saint Anna!

And of Thy light my soul illuminate,
That troubled is by the contagion sown
Here in my body, also by the weight
Of earthly lust and false loves I have known,
O haven of refuge O salvation shown
To those that are in sorrow and distress,
Now help, for to my work I'll me address

Yet pray I all who read what I do write,
Forgive me that I do no diligence
By subtle change to make the story right,
For I have taken both the words and sense
From him who wrote the tale in reverence
Of this one saint, I follow her legend
And pray you that you will my work amend

Bar of thy body, and dweltest mayden pure,
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee
That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,
Nat only helpest hem that preyen thee,
But ofte tyme, of thy benignitee,
Ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche,
Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.

Now help, thou meke and blisful fayre mayde,
Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle,
Think on the womman Cananee, that sayde
That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle
That from hir lordes table been y-falle,
And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,
Be sinful, yet accepte my bileve

And, for that feith is deed with-outen werkes,
So for to werken yif me wit and space,
That I be quit fro thennes that most derk is!
O thou, that art so fayr and ful of grace,
Be myn advocat in that heighe place
Ther-as withouten ende is songe "Osanne,"
Thou Cristes mooder, doghter dere of Anne!

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,
That troubled is by the contagioun
Of my body, and also by the wighte
Of erthly luste and fals affeccioun;
O haven of refut, o salvacioun
Of hem that been in sorwe and in distresse,
Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse

Yet preye I yow that reden that I wryte,
Foryeve me, that I do no diligence
This ilke storie subtilly to endyte;
For both have I the *wordes and sentence*
Of him that at the seintes reverence
The storie wroot, and folwe hir legende,
And prey yow, that ye wol my werk amende.

The interpretation of the name Cecilia, which
Friar Jacobus Januensis put in the Legenda Aurea

First would I you the name of Saint Cecilia
Expound, as men may in her story see
It is to say, in English, "Heaven's lily," a
Symbol of pure and virgin chastity,
Or, since she had the white of modesty,
And green of good conscience, and of good fame
The savour sweet, so "lily" was her name

Or else Cecilia means "path for the blind,"
For she example was, by good teaching;
Or else Cecilia, as I written find,
Is made, after a manner of joining,
Of "Heaven" and 'Lia", and, in figuring,
The "Heaven" is put for 'thought of holiness"
And 'Lia" for enduring busyness.

Cecilia may mean, too, in this wise,

First wolde I yow the name of seint Cecilie
Expoune, as men may in hir storie see,
It is to seye in English "hevenes lilie,"
For pure chastnesse of virginitee,
Or, for she whytnesse hadde of honestee,
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The sote savour, "lilie" was hir name.

Or Cecile is to seye "the wey to blinde,"
For she ensample was by good techinge;
Or elles Cecile, as I writen finde,
Is joyned, by a maner conjoininge
Of "hevene" and "Lia", and heer, in figuringe,
The "heven" is set for thoght of holinesse,
And "Lia" for hir lasting bisinesse.

Cecile may eek be seyd in this manere,

"Wantung of blindnesse," for hir grete light
Of sap ence, and for hir thewes clere,
Or elles, lo! this maydens name bright
Of hevene' and leos ' comth, for which by right
Men mighte hir wel the heven of peple ' calle,
Ensample of gode and wyse werkes alle

Lacking in blindness for her shining l ght
Of sapience and for good qualities
Or else behold! this maiden s name so bright
From Heaven and *leos* comes for which by right
Men well might her the Heaven of people call
Example of good and wise works unto all

For leos peple in English is to seye,
And right as men may in the hevene see
The sonne and mone and sterres every weye,
Right so men gostly, in this mayden free,
Seyen of fe th the magnanimitee,
And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,
And sondry werkes, brighte of excellence

Leos is folk in English so to say
And just as men may in the heavens see
The sun and moon and stars strewn every way
Just so men ghostly in th s ma den free,
See of her faith the magnanimity
And the whole glory of her sap ence
And many actions bright of excellence

And just as these philosophers do write
That heaven is round and moving and burning
Just so vas fair Cec lia the white

HERE IT ENDETH

THE SECOND NUN'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE SECOND NUN S TALE, OF THE LIFE OF SAINT CECILIA

... king him to kepe hir maydenhede

And when this mayden sholde unto a man
Y wedded be that was ful yong of age,
Which that y cleped was Valerian,
And day was comen of hir mariage,
She ful devout and humble in hir corage,
Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful fayre,
Had next hir flesh y clad hir in an heyre

And when this ma den must unto a man
Be wedded who was a young man in age
And who had to h s nime Valer an
And when the day was come for her marriage
She meek of heart devout and ever sage
Under her robe of gold well made and fa r
Had next her body placed a shirt of ha r

And whyl the organs maden melodye,
To god alone in herte thus sang she
O lord my soule and eek my body gye
Unwemmed lest that I confounded be
And for his love that deyde upon a tree,
Every seconde or thridde day she faste,
Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste

The night cam and to bedde moste she gon
With hir housbonde, as ofte is the manere,
And prively to him she seyde anon
O swete and wel biloved spouse dere,
Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it here,
Which that right fain I wolde unto yow seye,
So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye

Valerian to her his oath did swear
That evermore, whatever thing might be
He never would betray what she said there,
And so beginning straightway thus said she
"I have an angel lover that loves me
And with a great love, whether I wake or sleep,
He will my body ever guard and keep

"And if he feels (and this is truth" she said)
That you will touch or love me vulgarly,
At once he'll slay and leave you with the dead
And in your days of youth thus shall you die,
And if you love me cleanly so say I
He'll love you as now me, for your cleanness,
And show you all his joy and his brightness"

Valerian checked thus as God would mould,
Replied "If I'm to trust you let me see
That angel with my eyes and him behold,
And if that it a very angel be
Then will I do as you have asked of me;
And if you love another man, forsooth
Right with this sword then will I slay you both"

Cecilia replied right in this wise
"If you so wish, that angel shall you see
So you believe in Christ and you baptize
Go forth to Via Appia"[1] said she,
That from this town is distant but miles three,
nd to the poor folk who in that place dwell
ay to them what I'll now proceed to tell

Tell them that I Cecilia have sent
ou to the good man Urban, who is old,
or secret need and with a good intent
nd when this holy Urban you behold
ell him the thing that I to you have told
nd when he shall have purged you of your sin
hat angel shall you see ere thence you win

alerian to that place got him gone,
nd just as he'd been told about the thing,
le found this ancient saint Urban, anon,
mong the holy catacombs lurking
nd he anon with never tarrying,
old him his errand, and when it was told,
Irban for joy his two hands did uphold

ome teardrops from his two eyes he let fall—
Almighty Lord O Jesus Christ" said he,
Sower of counsel chaste, herd of us all,
The fruit of that same seed of chastity
Which Thou sowed'st in Cecilia take to Thee!
Lo like a busy bee, and without guile,
Thy thrall Cecilia serves Thee all the while!

"For that same spouse that lately wedded she,
Who was like lion fierce, she sends him here,
As meek as ever was a lamb to Thee!"
And with that word anon there did appear
An old, old man, clothed all in white clothes clear,

Valerian gan faste unto hir swere,
That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,
He sholde never mo biwreyen here,
And thanne at erst to him thus seyde she,
"I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with greet love, wher-so I wake or slepe,
Is redy ay my body for to kepe

And if that he may felen, out of drede,
That ye me touche or love in vileinye,
He right anon wol slee yow with the dede,
And in your yowthe thus ye shulden dye,
And if that ye in clene love me gye,
He wol yow loven as me, for your clennesse,
And shewen yow his joye and his brightnesse."

Valerian, corrected as god wolde,
Answerde agayn, "if I shal trusten thee,
Lat me that angel see, and him biholde,
And if that it a verray angel be,
Than wol I doon as thou hast preyed me,
And if thou love another man, for sothe
Right with this swerd than wol I slee yow bothe."

Cecile answerde anon right in this wyse,
"If that yow list, the angel shul ye see,
So that ye trowe on Crist and yow baptyse
Goth forth to Via Apia," quod she,
"That fro this toun ne stant but myles three,
And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,
Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow telle

Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem sente,
To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,
For secree nedes and for good entente
And whan that ye seint Urban han biholde,
Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow tolde,
And whan that he hath purged yow fro sinne,
Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye twinne"

Valerian is to the place y-gon,
And right as him was taught by his lerninge,
He fond this holy olde Urban anon
Among the seintes buriels louinge
And he anon, with-outen taryinge,
Dide his message, and whan that he it tolde,
Urban for joye his hondes gan up holde

The teres from his yën leet he falle—
"Almighty lord, O Jesu Crist," quod he,
"Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle,
The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee
That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to thee!
Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with outen gyle,
Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!

For thilke spouse, that she took but now
Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth here,
As meke as ever was any lamb, to yow!"
And with that worde, anon ther gan appere
An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere,

[1] A district near Rome (not the famous highway) where the earliest catacombs were located.

That hadde a book with lettre of golde in honde,
And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.

Who had a golden lettered book in hand,
And who before Valerian did stand

These words in very gold were written there

When this was read, then said the ancient man·
' Do you believe or not? Say 'Yea' or 'Nay' "
"I do believe this," said Valerian,
"For truer thing than this, I dare well say,
Under the heavens none can think nor may."
Then vanished the old man, he knew not where,
And Pope Urban baptized him even there

Valerian goth hoom, and fint Cecilie
With inne his chambre with an angel stonde;
This angel hadde of roses and of lilie
Corones two, the which he bar in honde,
And first to Cecile, as I understonde,
He yaf that oon, and after gan he take
That other to Valerian, hir make

And to Cecilia, as I understand,
He gave the one, and gave the other straight
Unto this said Valerian, her mate

"With body clene and with unwemmed thoght
Kepeth ay wel thise corones," quod he,
"Fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,
Ne never mo ne shal they roten be,
Ne lese her sote savour, trusteth me,
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his yë,
But he be chaast and hate vileinyë

Nor lose their perfume sweet, so you trust me;
And never man shall see them with his eye,
Save he be chaste and hate depravity

"And you, Valerian, since you so soon

I pray you that my brother may have grace
To know the truth, as I do in this place "

The angel seyde, "god lyketh thy requeste,
And bothe, with the palm of martirdom,
Ye shullen come unto his blisful feste."
And with that word Tiburce his brother com.
And whan that he the savour undernom
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,
With-inne his herte he gan to wondre faste,

The roses and the lilies filled the air,
In heart he wondered much how came it there,

And seyde, "I wondre, this tyme of the yeer,

And said "I wonder much, this time of year,

Valerian seyde, "two corones han we,
Snow-whyte and rose-reed, that shynen
clere,

Valerian replied "Two crowns have we,
Snow white and rose red, and they're bright and
fair,

Tibertius answered "Say you this to me
In truth? Or do I dream I hear all this?"
"In dreams," replied Valerian, then, 'have we
Lived to this time, O brother mine, ywis
In truth now for the first time our life is "
"How know you?" asked Tibertius In what
wise?"
Valerian said: "You will I now apprise

Saint Ambrose of the two does testify
In his Preface, this noble doctor dear
Commends the story, making it all clear.

The palm of martyrdom, thus to receive,
This Saint Cecilia, filled with God's gift,
The world and even her chamber did she leave;
Witness Tibertius' and Valerian's shrift,
To whom the good God sent by angel swift
Two crowns of flowers fair and sweet smelling,
And bade the angel take them as fitting

The maiden brought these men to bliss
above,
The world has learned what it is worth, 'tis plain,

"Whoso believes not this, a beast he is,"
Said then Tibertius, "if I shall not lie "

Tibertius answered, saying "Brother dear,
First tell me where to go and to what man."
"To whom?" said he, 'Come forth, and with good
cheer,
For I will lead you unto Pope Urban."
"To Urban? Brother mine, Valerian,"

Whiche that thyn yën han no might to see;
And as thou smellest hem thurgh my preyere,
So shaltow seen hem, leve brother dere,
If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,
Bileve aright and knowen verray trouthe."

Tiburce answerde, "seistow this to me
In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?"
"In dremes," quod Valerian, "han we be
Unto this tyme, brother myn, y-wis
But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is."
"How woostow this," quod Tiburce, "in what
wyse?"
Quod Valerian, "that shal I thee devyse

The angel of god hath me the trouthe y-taught
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt reneye
The ydoles and be clene, and elles naught "—
And of the miracle of thise corones tweye
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye,
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and seith in this manere:

The palm of martirdom for to receyve,
Seinte Cecile, fulfild of goddes yifte,
The world and eek hir chambre gan she weyve;
Witnes Tyburces and Valerians shrifte,
To whiche god of his bountee wolde shifte
Corones two of floures wel smellinge,
And made his angel hem the corones bringe:

The mayde hath broght thise men to blisse
above,
The world hath wist what it is worth, certeyn,
Devocioun of chastitee to love.—
Tho shewede him Cecile al open and pleyn
That alle ydoles nis but a thing in veyn;
For they been dombe, and therto they been deve,
And charged him his ydoles for to leve.

"Who so that troweth nat this, a beste he is,"
Quod tho Tiburce, "if that I shal nat lye "
And she gan kisse his brest, that herde this,
And was ful glad he coude trouthe espye.
"This day I take thee for myn allye,"
Seyde this blisful fayre mayde dere;
And after that she seyde as ye may here:

"Lo, right so as the love of Crist," quod she,
"Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wyse
Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,
Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despyse
Go with thy brother now, and thee baptyse,
And make thee clene, so that thou mowe biholde
The angels face of which thy brother tolde "

Tiburce answerde and seyde, "brother dere,
First tel me whider I shal, and to what man?"
"To whom?" quod he, "com forth with right good
chere,
I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban."
"Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,"

Quod tho Tiburce, "woltow me thider lede?
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban," quod he tho,
"That is so ofte dampned to be deed,
And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,
And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?
Men sholde him brennen in a fyr so reed
If he were founde, or that men mighte him spye;
And we also, to bere him companye—

And whyl we seken thilke divinitee
That is y-hid in hevene prively,
Algate y-brend in this world shul we be!"
To whom Cecile answerde boldely,
'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
This lyf to lese, myn owene dere brother,
If this were livinge only and non other

But ther is better lyf in other place,
That [illegible]

By word and by miracle goddes sone,
When he [illegible]

"That shal I telle," quod she, "er I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,
So, in o being of divinitee,
Three persones may ther right wel be."
Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche
Of Cristes come and of his peynes teche,

And many pointes of his passioun,
How goddes sone in this world was withholde,
To doon mankinde pleyn remissioun,
That was y-bounde in sinne and cares colde
Al this thing she unto Tiburce tolde
And after this Tiburce, in good entente,
With Valerian to pope Urban he wente,

That thanked god, and with glad herte and light
He cristned him [illegible]

[illegible] angel of god, and every maner bone
That he god axed, it was sped ful sone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn
How many wondres Jesus for hem wroghte;
But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn,

Tibertius said, "and thither will you lead?
I think this were a wondrous thing indeed.

'Surely you mean not Urban!" he cried out,
[illegible]

[illegible]

"But there's a better life in other place,
[illegible]
And all that is has made with reasoned thought,
The Spirit which from Father did proceed
Has given a soul to each, fear not indeed

[illegible]
Did you not say, just now, in manner clear,
There's but one God, the Lord in truth, no less,
And now to three, how can you bear witness?"

[illegible]

'Twere hard in proper order to explain
How many wonders Jesus for them wrought,
But at the last, to tell it short and plain,

They by the sergeants of Rome town were sought,
And to Almachius the prefect brought,
Who questioned them and learned their whole
  intent,
And unto Jupiter's image had them sent,

Saying "Who will not go and sacrifice,
Strike off his head, that is my sentence here"
These martyrs, then, of whom I do apprise,
One Maximus, who was an officer
Of the prefect's, and his corniculer,
Took them, and when the saints forth he had led,
Himself he wept, for pity that he had

When Maximus had learned their creed and lore,
Of executioners obtained he leave,
And to his house he led them, without more,
And by their preaching, ere it came to eve,
They from the executioners did reave,
And Maximus and from his folk, each one,
The false faith, to believe in God alone

Cecilia came, when it was fully night,
With priests who christened them together there,
And afterward, when day came with its light,
Cecilia them bade, with steadfast cheer
"Now Christ's own knights together, lief and dear,
The works of darkness cast you all away,
And arm you in the armour of the day

"You have indeed fought the good fight—all hail!
Your course is done, your faith you have preserved,
Go to the crown of life that shall not fail,
The Righteous Judge, Whom you have so well
  served,
Will give it to you, since you've it deserved"
And when as I have told this thing was said,
To make the sacrifice they forth were led

But when before the image they were brought,
Briefly to tell the end as it is known,
They'd not incense, and sacrificed they naught,
But on their knees they reverently knelt down,
With humble heart and firm devotion shown,
And so they lost their heads there in that place.
Their spirits went unto the King of Grace.

[illegible]

Cecilia him buried with the others,
Valerian and Tibertius, quietly
[illegible]

The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem soghte,
And hem biforn Almache the prefect broghte,
Which hem apposed, and knew al hir
  entente,
And to the image of Jupiter hem sente,

And seyde, "who so wol nat sacrifyse,
Swap of his heed, this is my sentence here."
Anon thise martirs that I yow devyse,
Oon Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes and his corniculere,
Hem hente, and whan he forth the seintes ladde,
Him-self he weep, for pitee that he hadde.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gat him of the tormentoures leve,
And ladde hem to his hous withoute more;
And with hir preching, er that it were eve,
They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone
The false feith, to trowe in god allone.

Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen night,
With preestes that hem cristned alle y-fere;
[illegible]
And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse.

Ye han for sothe y-doon a greet bataille,
Your cours is doon, your feith han ye conserved,
Goth to the corone of lyf that may nat faille;
The rightful juge, which that ye han
  served,
Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved."
And whan this thing was seyd as I devyse,
Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrifyse.

But whan they weren to the place broght,
To tellen shortly the conclusioun,
[illegible]

Cecile him took and buried him anoon
By Tiburce and Valerian softely,
Withinne hir burying-place, under the stoon.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministres fecchen openly
Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence
Doon sacrifyce, and Jupiter encense.

But they, converted at hir wyse lore,
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hir word, and cryden more and more,

This with o voys we trowen, thogh we sterve! '

I am a gentil womman born ' quod she
I axe thee quod he thogh it thee greve,
Of thy religioun and of thy bileve '

Ye han bigonne your question folily,'
Quod she, that wolden two answeres conclude
In oo demande, ye axed lewedly '
Almache answerde unto that similitude,
Of whennes comth thyn answering so rude?
Of whennes? ' quod she, whan that she was freyned
Of conscience and of good feith unfeyned "

Almachius seyde n takestow non hede
Of my power? and she answerde him this—
Your might quod she, ' ful litel is to drede,

Your

... this, and for we bere a Cristen name,
Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame

But we that knowen thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it nat withseye '

' O juge confus in thy nycetee,
Woltow that I reneye innocence,
To make me a wikked wight? quod she,
' Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,

Almach us who heard of this same thing

Whence comes your answering so rough and rude?
Whence? asked she when that she was thus constrained
From conscience and from simple faith unfeigned '

Almach us said And do you take no heed
Of power I wield? And she repl ed like this
Your might said she is scarce a thing to dread
For po ver of every mortal man but is
Like to a bladder full of wind ywis
For with a needle s point, when it is blown
Pr ck it and all the pride of it comes down

Erroneously have you begun ' said he
And deep in error do you still remain
Kno v you not how our mighty princes free

And you who know ... our innocence
Merely because we do our reverence
To Christ and bear ourselves the Christian name
You thus impute to us a crime and blame

But we who know far better than can you
Its v rtue will not once the name gainsay
Alm chius sa d Choose one of these things two

O judge conv cted by your own folly
Will you that I deny my innocence
And make myself a criminal? asked she.
Lo, he dissimulates in audience

He glares and rages in his violence!"
To whom Almachius "O unhappy wretch,
Do you not know how far my might may stretch?

"Did not our mighty princes to me give,
Aye, both the power and authority
To give to people death or make them live?
Why do you speak so proudly then to me?'
"I speak to you but steadfastly," said she,
"Not proudly, for I say, upon my side,
We've deadly hatred for the vice of pride.

"And if to hear a truth you do not fear,
Then will I show, all openly, by right,
[illegible]
You have no other power or other leave!

"You may but say, your princes did declare
You were death's officer, if more you claim,
You lie, for of more power you are bare"
'This bold speech drop!' Almachius did exclaim,
"And do your sacrifice in our gods' name,
I care not what you wrongfully impute,
Like a philosopher I'll bear it, mute,

[illegible]
And that you were and are, in every wise,
An ignorant officer and vain justice

"There is no proving by your outward eye,
[illegible]
And test it well, and 'twill be stone, you'll find,
Since you can see it not with your eyes blind

'It is a shame that all the people shall
So scorn you, judge, and laugh at your folly,
For commonly men know it above all
That mighty God is in His heaven high,
And idols such as these, they testify,
May bring no profit to themselves or you—
They have no power, nothing can they do"

[illegible]
For in a bath they locked her and began
(All night and day) a great fire to fan

The long night through, and a long day also,
For all the fire and all the bath's great heat,

He stareth and woodeth in his advertence!"
To whom Almachius, "unsely wrecche,
Ne woostow nat how far my might may strecche?

Han noght our mighty princes to me yeven,
Ye, bothe power and auctoritee
To maken folk to dyen or to liven?
Why spekestow so proudly than to me?"
"I speke noght but stedfastly," quod she,
"Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my syde,
We haten deedly thilke vyce of pryde.

And if thou drede nat a sooth to here,
Than wol I shewe al openly, by right,
That thou hast maad a ful gret lesing here
Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven might
Bothe for to sleen and for to quiken a wight,
Thou, that ne mayst but only lyf bireve,
Thou hast non other power ne no leve!

But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee maked
Ministre of deeth, for if thou speke of mo,
Thou lyest, for thy power is ful naked"
"Do wey thy boldnes," seyde Almachius tho,
"And sacrifyce to our goddes, er thou go,
I recche nat what wrong that thou me profre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre,

But thilke wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekest of our goddes here," quod he.
Cecile answerede, "O nyce creature,
Thou seydest no word sin thou spak to me
That I ne knew therwith thy nycetee,
And that thou were, in every maner wyse,
A lewed officer and a veyn justyse.

Ther lakketh no-thing to thyn utter yën
That thou nart blind, for thing that we seen alle
That it is stoon, that men may wel espyen,
That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle
I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,
And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it finde,
Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën blinde.

It is a shame that the peple shal
[illegible]

Thise wordes and swiche othere seyde she,
And he weex wroth, and bad men sholde hir lede
Hom til hir hous, "and in hir hous," quod he,
"Brenne hir right in a bath of flambes rede"
And as he bad, right so was doon in dede;
For in a bath they gonne hir faste shetten,
And night and day greet fyr they under betten.

The longe night and eek a day also,
For al the fyr and eek the bathes hete,

She sat al cold, and felede no wo,

She sat there cool and calm and felt no woe,
Nor did it make her any drop to sweat
But in that bath her life should she lose yet,
For he Almachius with bad intent,
To slay her in the bath his headsman sent

Three strokes in the nekke he smoot hir tho,
The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
He mighte noght smyte al hir nekke a two,

That no man might another give the pain
Of striking four blows whether soft or sore,
This executioner dared do no more

But half-deed [illegible]

[illegible] fostred, hem she gan to preche,

And three days lived she in this same torment
But never ceased at all the faith to teach
That she had fostered, dying did she preach

And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir thing,
And to the pope Urban bitook hem tho
And seyde, ' I axed this at hevene king,

To them she gave her goods and everything
And of Pope Urban put them in the care
And said This much I asked of Heaven s King
A respite of three days that you might share
With me these souls and too I would prepare
Before I go my house a church to make
That it be kept forever for my sake

Seint Urban, with his deknes, prively
The body fette, and buried it by nighte
Among his othere seintes honestly
Hir hous the chirche of seint Cecilie highte,
Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte,
In which, into this day, in noble wyse,
Men doon to Crist and to his seint servyse

Saint Urban with his deacons privately,
The body took and buried it by night

To Christ and to His saint men service pay

HERE IS ENDED THE SECOND NUN'S TALE

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE OF THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE

Whan ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,
Er we had riden fully fyve myle,
At Boghton under Blee us gan atake
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undernethe he hadde a whyt surplys
His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
So swatte, that it wonder was to see,
It semed he had priked myles three

When Saint Cecilia s Life was done and whiles
We had not farther gone a good five miles

The breast strap of the harness foam stood high
Whereof he was as flecked as is a pie
A double wallet on his crupper lay,

The way he had his cloak sewed to his hood
From which when long I had communed with me,

But what a joy it was to see him sweat!
His forehead dripped as a distillatory
Were full of plantain and of pellitory
And this man when he came began to cry
God save said he this jolly company!
Fast I have spurred said he then for your sake
Because I wanted you to overtake
To ride on in this merry company
His yeoman too was full of courtesy
And said Good sirs all in the morningtide
Out of your hostelry I saw you ride
And warned my lord and master full and plain
And he to ride with you is truly fain
For his amusement he loves dalliance
Friend for your warning God give you good chance
Said then our host for truly it would seem
Your lord is wise and so I may well deem

He knows of mirth and of all jollity
Not but enough and also sir trust me
If you but knew him as well as do I
You d wonder much how well and craftily
He can behave and that in different wise
He s taken on him many an enterprise
That were right hard for anyone that s here
(Unless he learned it) to effect I fear

Is he a clerk or not? Tell what he is

And yet I help by working at his side)
That all this pleasant land through which we ride

This thing is wondrous marvelous to me
Since your lord is a man of such science
For which men should hold him in reverence,

How that his cloke was sowed to his hood,
For which, when I had longe avysed me,
I demed him som chanon for to be
His hat heng at his bak doun by a laas,
For he had riden more than trot or paas,
He had ay priked lyk as he were wood
A clote leef he hadde under his hood
For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete
But it was joye for to seen him swete!
His forheed dropped as a stillatorie,
Were ful of plantain and of paritorie
And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,
'God save," quod he, 'this joly companye!
Faste have I priked, quod he, 'for your sake,
By cause that I wolde yow atake,
To ryden in this mery companye"
His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
And seyde, sires, now in the morwe tyde
Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde
And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,
For his desport, he loveth daliaunce"
Freend, for thy warning god yeve thee good chaunce,"
Than seyde our host, "for certes, it wolde seme
Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme,
He is ful jocund also, dar I leye
Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye,
With which he glade may this companye?"
'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,
He can of murthe, and eek of jolitee
Nat but ynough, also sir, trusteth me,
And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse
He hath take on him many a greet empryse,
Which were ful hard for any that is here
To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere
As homely as he rit amonges yow,
If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prow,
Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce
For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce
Al that I have in my possessioun
He is a man of heigh discrecioun,
I warne you wel, he is a passing man'
Wel,' quod our host 'I pray thee, tel me than,
Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is"
Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y wis,"
Seyde this yeman,' and in wordes fewe,
Host, of his craft som what I wol yow shewe
I seye, my lord can swich subtilitee—
(But al his craft ye may nat wite at me,
And som what helpe I yet to his werking)—
That al this ground on which we been ryding,
Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,

me?
God help me so, for he shal never thee!
(But I wol nat avowe that I seye,
And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye)

Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,
Wher as thise robbours and thise theves by kinde
Holden hir privee fereful residence,
As they that dar nat shewen hir presence,

...her folk we doon illusioun,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten, or twelve or many sommes mo,
And make hem wenen, at the leeste weye,
That of a pound we coude make tweye!
Yet is it fals but ay we han good hope
It for to doon ...

...this yeman was thus in his talking
This chanoun drough him neer, and herde al thing
Which this yeman spak, for suspecioun
Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun
For Catoun seith, that he that gilty is
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y wis
That was the cause he gan so ny him drawe

That of h s d gnity his care s so slight
His over garment is not worth a mite
For such a man as he so may I go!
It is all d rty and it s torn also
Why is your lord so slovenly pray I

me?
God help me wealthy he will never be!
(But I will not stand back of what I say
And therefore keep it secret I you pray)
He is too wise in faith as I believe
That wh ch is overdone, as I conceive
Won t turn out right clerks say and that s a vice
In that I hold him ignorantly nice
For when a man has overmuch of wit
It often happens he m suses it
So does my lord and this th ng grieves me sore
May God amend it I can say no more
No matter then good yeoman said our host
S nce of the learning of your lord you boast
Tell how he works I pray you heartily,
S nce he s so clever and withal so sly
Where do you dwell if you may tell it me?
W thin the suburbs of a town sa d he
Lurking in corners and in alleys blind
Wherein these thieves and robbers every kind
Have all the r privy fearful residence
As those who dare not show men the r presence
So do we live if I m to tell the truth
Now said our host let me go on forsooth
Why are you so discoloured in the face?
Peter[1] cried he God give it evil grace!
I am so wont upon the fire to blow
That it has changed my colour as I trow
I m not wont in a mirror sir to pry
But I work hard to learn to multiply[2]
We stir and mix and stare into the fire
But for all that we fail of our desire
And never do we come to our conclusion
To many folk we bring about illus on
And borrow gold perhaps a pound or two
Or ten or twelve or any sum will do
And make them th nk aye at the least it s plain
That from a pound of gold we can make twain!
It is all false but yet we have great hope
That we can do it and after it we grope
But that science is so far us before
We never can in sp te of all we swore
Come up with it it slides away so fast
And it will make us beggars at the last
The wh le this yeoman chattered on like this
The canon nearer drew and did not miss
A thing he said suspicion always woke
In him indeed when anybody spoke
For Cato says suspicion s ever fed
In any gu lty man when aught is said
That was the reason why he drew so near

[2]To increase gold or silver in amount by alchemy

To his yeoman his gossiping to hear
And thus he said unto his yeoman then
'Now hold your peace and do not *speak again*
For if you do you ll pay it ruefully,
You slander me here in this *company,*
And you uncover that which you should hide
Yea? said our host Tell on whate er betide,
For all his threatening do not care a mite!
In faith ' said he my caring is but slight
And when this canon saw how it would be
That his yeoman would tell his privity
He fled away for very grief and shame
Ah said the yeoman, hence shall come a game
All that I know anon now will I tell
Since he is gone the Fiend take him to Hell!
With him hereafter I ll have naught to do
For penny or for pound I promise you!
He that first brought me into that ill game
Before he die sorrow have he and shame!
For it s no game to me sirs by my fay,
That I feel well, whatever man may say
And yet *for all my smart and all my* grief
For all the *sorrow* labour and mischief,
I never could leave off in any wise
Now would to God that my wit might suffice
To tell of all pertaining to that art!
Nevertheless I will relate a part
Since now my lord is gone I will not spare
The things I know about I will declare

To his yeman, to herknen al his sawe
And thus he seyde un-to his yeman tho,
"*Hold thou thy pees, and spek* no wordes *mo,*
For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abye,
Thou sclaundrest me heer in this companye,
And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde"
"Ye," quod our host, 'telle on, what so bityde,
Of al his threting rekke nat a myte!'
"In feith," quod he, "namore I do but lyte"
And whan this chanon saugh it wolde nat be,
But his yeman wolde telle his privetee,
He fledde awey for verray sorwe and shame
"A!' quod the yeman, '*heer shal aryse game,*
Al that I can anon now wol I telle
Sin he is goon, the foule feend him quelle!
For never her after wol I with him mete
For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete!
He that me broghte first unto that game,
Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame!
For it is ernest to me, by my feith,
That fele I wel, what so any man seith
And yet, *for al my smerte and al my grief,*
For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
I coude never leve it in no wyse
Now wolde god my wit mighte suffyse
To tellen al that longeth to that art!
But natheles yow wol I tellen part,
Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare,
Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol declare"—

HERE ENDETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE CANON S YEOMAN HIS TALE

First Part

Seven years I ve served this canon but no more
I know about his science than before
All that I had I have quite lost thereby
And God knows so have many more than I
Where I was wont to be right *fresh* and gay
Of clothing and *of other* good array
Now may I wear my old hose on my head
And where my colour was both fresh and red,
Now it is wan and of a leaden hue
Whoso this science follows he shall rue
And from my toil yet bleary is my eye
Behold the gain it is to multiply!
That slippery science has made me so bare
That I ve no goods wherever *I may fare*
And I am still indebted so thereby
For gold that I have borrowed truthfully
That while I live I shall repay it never
Let every man be warned by me for ever!
And any man who casts his lot thereon,
If he continue I hold his thrift gone
So help me God thereby he shall not win
But empty *purse and have his wits grow thin*
And when he, through his madness and folly,
Has lost his own, by willing jeopardy,

With this chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer,
And of his science am I never the neer
Al that I hadde, I have y lost ther-by,
And god wot, so hath many mo than I
Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay
Of clothing and of other good array,
Now may I were an hose upon myn heed,
And wher my colour was bothe *fresh* and reed,
Now is it wan and of a leden hewe,
Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe
And of my swink yet blered is myn ye,
Lo! which avantage is to multiplye!
That slyding science hath me maad so bare,
That I have no good, *wher that ever I fare,*
And yet I am endetted so ther by
Of gold that I have borwed, trewely,
That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never
Lat every man be war by me for ever!
What maner man that casteth him ther-to,
If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do
So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat winne
But empte his purs, and make his wittes th
And whan he, thurgh his madnes and fo
Hath lost his owene good thurgh

Thanne he excyteth other folk ther to,
To lese hir good as he him-self hath do
For unto shrewes joye it is and ese
To have hir felawes in peyne and disese,
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk
Of

Then will he incite others many a one
To lose their wealth as he himself has done
For unto scoundrels it s a pleasant thing
Their fellows in distress and pain to bring
Thus was I taught once by a learned clerk
Of that no matter I ll speak of our work
When we are where v e choose to exercise
Our elvish craft why we seem v ondrous wise
Our terms are all so learned and so quaint
I blow the fire till my heart s like to faint

What sholde I tellen ech proporcioun
Of thinges whiche that we werche upon,
As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be,
Of silver or som other quantitee
And bisie me to telle yow the names
Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,
That into poudre grounden been ful smal?
And in an erthen potte how put is al,
A

Why tell you what proportions of things went
In working out each new experiment
As five ounces or six it may well be
Of silver or some other quantity?
Or tell you all the names my memory fails
Of orpiment burnt bones and iron scales
That into powder we ground fine and small?
Or in an earthen pot how we put all,
And salt put in and also pepper dear
Before these powders that I speak of here
And covered all these with a plate of glass,
And of the various other gear there was?
And of the sealing of the pot and glass
So that the air might no way from it pass?
And of the slow fire and the forced also
Wh ch we made there and of the care and woe
Th

For alle our sleightes we can nat conclude
Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,
Our prn nd n l

Our orp ment and subl med mercury
O

M ght in our work ng anything ava l
For lost was all our labour and travail
And all the cost the devil s o vn to pay
Was lost also for we made no headway
There is also full many another th ng
That to our craft pertains in labouring
Though name them properly I never can
Because indeed I am an gnorant man
Yet will I tell them as they come to mind
Though I ll not try to class each one by kind
Armenian bole borax the green of brass
And sundry vessels made of earth and glass
Our ur nals and all ou descensor es
Vials and crucibles sublimator es
C

I wol I telle hem as they come to minde,
Though I ne an

Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
To bringe about our craft if that we may
Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,

And waters all prepared for albication
Unslaked lime chalk and white of egg I say
Powders diverse and ashes dung piss clay,
Little waxed bags saltpetre vitriol
And many a different fire of wood and coal
Alkali salt potassium carbonate
And our burnt matters and coagulate
Clay mixed with horses or men s hair and oil
Of tartar alum glass yeast wort argol
Realgar and our matters absorbent
And with them too our matters resorbent
And how we practised silver citrinat on
And our cementing and our fermentation
Our moulds and testers aye and many more
I will tell you as I was taught before
The bodies seven and the spirits four
In order as my master named of yore
The first of spirits then quicksilver is
The second arsenic the third ywis
Is sal ammoniac the fourth brimstone
The seven bod es I ll describe anon
Sol gold is Luna s silver as we see
Mars iron and quicks lver s Mercury,
Saturn is lead and Jupiter is t n

Cano n or priest or any other wight
Though he sit at his books both day and night
In learning of this elvish fruitless lore
All is in vain and by gad it s much more!

In final count he shall find it all one
For both of them and this by my salvat on
Come to one end seeking multiplication
They fare the same when they ve done everything
That is to say they both fail sorro ving
Yet I *forgot* to tell you in detail
Of the corrosive waters and limaille
And some of bodies the moll fication
And on the other hand of induration
Oils and ablutions metals fusible—
More than a bible it would need to tell

For had we that then were we safe enov
But unto God in Heaven do I vow
For all our art when we ve done all things thus

And of watres albificacioun,
Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,
Poudres diverse, asshes, dong, pisse, and cley,
Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole,
And divers fyres maad of wode and cole,
Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat,
And combust materes and coagulat,
Cley maad with hors or mannes heer, and oile
Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and argoile,
Resalgar, and our materes enbibing,
And eek of our materes encorporing,
And of our silver citrinacioun,
Our cementing and fermentacioun,
Our ingottes, testes, and many mo
I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,
The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene
The firste spirit quik silver called is,
The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,
Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon
The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heer anoon
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,
Mars yren, Mercurie quik silver we clepe,
Saturnus leed, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus coper, by my fader kin!
This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse,
He shal no good han that him may suffyse,
For al the good he spendeth ther aboute,
He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute
Who-so that listeth outen his folye,
Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplye,
And every man that oght hath in his cofre,
Lat him appere, and wexe a philosofre
Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere?
Nay, nay, god woot, al be he monk or frere,

To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee,
Fy! spek nat ther of, for it wol nat be,
Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,
As in effect, he shal finde it al oon
For bothe two, by my savacioun,
Concluden, in multiplicacioun,
Y lyke wel, whan they han al y do,
This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two
Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille
Of watres corosif and of limaille,
And of bodyes mollificacioun,
And also of hir induracioun,
Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,
To tellen al wolde passen any bible

Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon
For hadde we him, than were we siker y now
But, unto god of heven I make avow,
For al our craft, whan we han al y do,

I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever,
That futur temps hath maad men to dissever,
In trust ther-of, from al that ever they hadde
Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,
For unto hem it is a bitter swete,
So semeth it for nadde they but a shete
Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne a night,
And a bak to walken inne by day light,
They wolde hem selle and spenden on this craft,

Of metals with a certein quantitee,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he—

goon,
And somme of hem sinken in to the ground—

shewe
I trowe

nyce,

The tension of such hope is sharp and hard
I warn you well it means go seeking ever
That future time has made men to dissever
Trusting that hope from all that ever they had
Yet of that art they cannot well grow sad
For unto them it is a bitter sweet

Men know them by their smell of foul brimstone
For all the world they stink as does a goat
Their savour is so rammish and so hot

And if a man but ask them privately

Before the pot upon the fire be done
Of metals in a certain quantity
My lord it tempers and no man save he—
Now he is gone I dare say this boldly—
For as men say he can work artfully
Always I well know he has such a name
And yet full often has he been to blame
And know you how? Full oft it happens so,
The pot broke and farewell! All vanished O!
These metals have such violence and force
That crucibles cannot resist their course
Unless they are built up of lime and stone
They penetrate and through the wall they're
gone
And some of them sink right into the ground—
Thus have we lost at times full many a pound—
And some are scattered all the floor about.
Some leap up to the roof Beyond a doubt
Although the Fiend's to us not
visible
I think he's with us aye that same scoundrel!
In Hell wherein he is the lord and sire
There's not more woe nor rancour nor more ire
For when our pot is broken as I've said
Each man will scold and think that he's been bled

'It was not tempered as it ought to be"
"Nay," said the fourth "shut up and list to me
It was because our fire was not of beech
That's why, by all the wealth I hope to reach!
I cannot tell where one should put the blame,
There was a dreadful quarrel just the same
"What!" cried my lord "there's no more to be done
Whatever 'twas I'll know the reason soon
I am quite certain that the pot was crazed
Be as it may, do not stand there amazed
As always, sweep the floor up quickly lad,
Pluck up your hearts and be both blithe and glad
The rubbish in a heap then swept up was
And on the floor was spread a large canvas,
And all this rubbish in a sieve was thrown
And sifted picked and whirled both up and down
"By gad" said one "something of our metal
There is yet here although we have not all
Although this thing has gone awry for now
Another time it may be well enow
We must put all our wealth at adventure
A merchant's luck gad! will not aye endure,
Believe me in his high prosperity
Sometimes his freight will sink beneath the sea
And sometimes comes it safely unto land"
"Peace" said my lord "next time I'll understand
How to proceed and with a better aim
And save I do sirs let me be to blame
There was defect in something well I know 't"
Another said the fire was far too hot
But were it hot or cold I dare say this
That we concluded evermore amiss
We fail of that which we desire to have,
And in our madness evermore we rave
And when we're all together then each one
Seems as he were a very Solomon
But everything that glisters like fine gold
Is not gold as I've often heard it told
And every apple that is fair to eye
Is yet not sound whatever hucksters cry,
And even so that's how it fares with us
For he that seems the wisest by Jesus
Is greatest fool when proof is asked in brief
And he that seems the truest is a thief
That shall you know ere I from you do wend
When of my tale I've made at length an end

It was nat tempred as it oghte be"
"Nay!" quod the ferthe, "stint, and herkne me,
By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of beech,
That is the cause, and other noon, so theech!"
I can nat telle wher-on it was long,
But wel I wot greet stryf is us among
"What!" quod my lord, "ther is na more to done,
Of thise perils I wol be war eft-sone,
I am right siker that the pot was crased
Be as be may, be ye no-thing amased,
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swythe,
Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladde and blythe"
The mullok on an hepe y sweped was,
And on the floor y-cast a canevas,
And al this mullok in a sive y throwe,
And sifted, and y piked many a throwe
"Pardee," quod oon, "somwhat of our metal
Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat al
Al though this thing mishapped have as now,
Another tyme it may be wel y now,
Us moste putte our good in aventure,
A marchant, parde! may nat ay endure
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee,
Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,
And somtym comth it sauf un to the londe"
"Pees!" quod my lord, "the next tyme I wol fonde
To bringe our craft al in another plyte,
And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte,
Ther was defaute in som what, wel I woot"
Another seyde, the fyr was over hoot —
But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,
That we concluden evermore amis
We fayle of that which that we wolden have,
And in our madnesse evermore we rave
And whan we been togidres everichoon,
Every man semeth a Salomon
But al thing which that shyneth as the gold
Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told,
Ne every appel that is fair at yë
Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye
Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us,
He that semeth the wysest, by Jesus!
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef,
And he that semeth trewest is a theef,
That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
By that I of my tale have maad an ende

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST PART

HERE FOLLOWETH THE SECOND PART

There is a canon of religion known
Among us who'd contaminate a town
Though 'twere as great as Nineveh the free
Rome Alexandria Troy, and others three
His tricks and all his infinite treacherousness
No man could write down fully as I guess
Though he should live unto his thousandth year
In all this world for falsehood he's no peer,
For in his terms he will so twist and wind
And speak in words so slippery of kind

Ther is a chanoun of religioun
Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun,
Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three
His sleightes and his infinit falsnesse
Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,
Thogh that he mighte liven a thousand yeer.
In al this world of falshede nis his peer;
For in his termes so he wolde him winde,
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,

When he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as him selven is
Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this,
And wol if that he live may a whyle,

... yow list to yeve me audience,

In London was a preest, an annueleer,[1]
That therin dwelled hadde many a yeer,
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable
Unto the ...

... herof no fors, I wol procede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte ...

... nother day do hange me by the hals!
This preest ...

But most religious canons just and true
Don t think I m slandering your house or you
Although my tale may of a canon be
Some rogue s in every order pardon me
And God forbid that for one rascal s sake
Against a group we condemnation make
To slander you is nowise my intent
But to correct what is amiss I m bent
This tale I tell here not alone for you

If any Judas in your convent be
Remove the man betimes I counsel you
Lest shame or loss or trouble should ensue
And be displeased in nothing I you pray
But hear what on this matter I may say

In London was a priest an annualeer[1]
Who had therein dwelt many a quiet year
A man so pleasant and so serviceable
To the goodwife who shared with him her table
That she would never suffer h m to pay
For board or clothing went he ever so gay

And if you find me false I shall not reck

[1]A pr est employed in singing ann versary Masses

"What!" cried this canon, "Should I be untrue?
Into my grave, or elsewise God forbid!
Trust this as surely as you trust your creed
And, sir," said he, "out of my privity,
I'll teach you plainly all the methods dear
so?
Mary! Thereof I pray you heartily."
"Right at your service, sir, and truthfully,"
Replied the canon, "else, may God forbid!"
Service this thief could offer, and he did!
Full true it is that service in this guise
Stinks, as take witness of these old men wise,
And soon enough I will this verify
By this canon, the root of treachery,
Who always had delight, nor could refrain—
Such devilish thoughts within his heart did reign—
When he brought Christian folk to tribulation
God keep us from his false dissimulation!
Naught understood this priest with whom he dealt,
And of his coming harm he nothing felt
O hapless priest! O hapless innocent!
Blinded by avarice malevolent!
O luckless one, full blind is your conceit,
By which your troubles will be clearly shown,
Unhappy man, I'll hasten on to tell
The folly into which you blindly fell
And, too, the treachery of that other wretch,
As far as what I know of him may stretch
This canon was my lord, you think I mean?
Sir host, in faith, and by the Heaven's Queen,
It was another canon, and not he,
Who has a hundred fold more subtlety!
At any rate, my cheeks begin to glow,
For redness have I none, right well I know,
In all my visage, for the fumes diverse
Of metals, whereof you've heard me rehearse,
Have all consumed and wasted my redness.

"What!" quod this chanoun, "sholde I be untrewe?
Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe
Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe
Un-to that day in which that I shal crepe
In-to my grave, and elles god forbede,
Bileveth this as siker as is your crede
God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
That ther was never man yet yvel apayd
For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
Ne never falshede in myn herte I mente.
And sir," quod he, "now of my privetee,
Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,
And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,
Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,
I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,
I wol yow teche pleynly the manere,
How I can werken in philosophye
Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at yë,
That I wol doon a maistrie er I go"
"Ye," quod the preest, "ye, sir, and wol ye so?
Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely!"
"At your comandement, sir, trewely,"
Quod the chanoun, "and elles god forbede!"
Lo, how this theef coude his servyse bede!
Ful sooth it is, that swich profred servyse
Stinketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse,
And that ful sone I wol it verifye
In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,
delte,
Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun
That refereth to thy confusioun,
Unhappy man! anon I wol me hye
To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye,
And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,
As ferforth as that my conning may strecche
This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden wene?
Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes quene,
Ever whan that I speke of his falshede,
For shame of him my chekes wexen rede,
Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,
For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage, for fumes dyverse
Of metals, which ye han herd me reherce,
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.

Now tak heed of this chanouns cursednesse!
Sir, quod he to the preest, 'lat your man gon
For quik silver, that we it hadde anon,
And lat him bringen ounces two or three,
And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see

as"

seest

To shewen hem thus muche of my science
For ye shul seen heer, by experience,
That this quik-silver wol I mortifye
Right

glad,
And couched coles as the chanoun bad
And whyle he bisy was, thus feendly wrecche,
This fals chanoun the foule feend him fecche!
Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,

No v take heed of this canon s wickedness
Sir this to the priest let your man be gone

He got him forth and came anon again
With this quicksilver truly to explain
And gave these ounces three to the canon
And he took them and laid them fairly down
And bade the servant coals to go and bring

least
Take in your hand and put yourself therein
An ounce of quicksilver and here begin
And in God s name to be philosopher!
There are but few to whom I would proffer
To make my science clear and evident
For you shall learn here, by experiment
That this quicksilver will I mortify
Right in your sight anon without a lie
And make it as good silver and as fine
As any that s in your purse or in mine
Or elsewhere ave and make it malleable
Otherwise hold me false unfit as well
Among good folk for ever to appear

And shut the door fast while we are about
Our secret work that no man may espy
The way we work in this philosophy

The priest at this damned canon s ordering
Upon the fire anon d d set this thing
And blew the fire and busied him full fast
With n the crucible the canon cast

glad
And heaped the coals up as the canon bade
And while he laboured thus this fiendish wretch
This canon false—may him the foul F end fetch!—
Out of his bosom took a beechen coal,

With blackened wax to keep the filings in
And understand you well that this false gin

If I knew how but he is here and there
He is so restless he abides nowhere
  But take heed now sirs for God s very love!
He took this coal whereof I spoke above
And in his hand he bore it privily
And wh le the priest did pile up busily
The burning coals as I told you ere this
This canon said My friend you do amiss
This is not p led up as it ought to be
But soon I shall amend all that said he
  Now let me thereof have a hand the whiles
For I ve great pity on you by Saint Giles!
You are right hot I see well how you sweat
Take here a cloth and wipe away the wet
And while the simple priest did wipe his face
Th s canon took his coal and with grave grace

  then
  For soon all shall be well I undertake
Let us sit down and let us merry make
And when this treacherous canon s beechen coal
Was burnt then all the filings from the hole
Into the crucible fell down anon

For of the trick he nothing understood
And when this alchemist was ready he
Said to the priest Rise up and stand by
  me

And too bring in with you a bowl or pan
Full of clear water and you ll see dear man
How well our business here shall thrive in brief
And yet that you may have no unbelief
Or think that somehow I m not doing right
I ll never be a moment out of sight
But go with you and come with you again
  The chamber door, then briefly to explain
They opened and they shut and went their way
And as they went they took the key I say
And came again without a long delay,

In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
And ther in put was of silver lymaille
An ounce, and stopped was, with outen fayle,
The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in
And understondeth, that this false gin
Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore,
And othere thinges I shal telle more
Herafterward, which that he with him broghte
Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte,
And so he dide, er that they wente a twinne,
Til he had terved him, coude he not blinne
It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,
On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke,
If I wiste how, but he is heer and ther
He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher
  But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes love!
He took his cole of which I spak above,
And in his hond he baar it privėly
And whyls the preest couchede busily
The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon amis,
This is nat couched as it oghte be,
But sone I shal amenden it, quod he
'Now lat me medle therwith but a whyle,
For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gyle!

Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonne faste brenne
  'Now yeve us drinke, quod the chanoun
    thenne,
'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake,
Sitte we doun, and lat us mery make"
And whan that this chanounes bechen cole
Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the hole,
Into the croslet fil anon adoun,
And so it moste nedes, by resoun,
Sin it so even aboven couched was,

  me,
And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,
Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalkstoon,
For I wol make oon of the same shap
That is an ingot, if I may han hap
And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne,
Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne
How that our bisinesse shal thryve and preve
And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I ne wol nat been out of your presence,
But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn"
The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,
They opened and shette, and wente hir weye
And forth with hem they carieden the keye,
And come agayn with-outen any delay

What sholde I tarien al the longe day?
He took the chalk and shoop it in the wyse
Of an ingot as I shal yow devyse
I seye he took out of his owene sleve

I say he took then out of h s own sleeve
A tain[1] of s lver (Hell the man receive!)
Wh ch was an ounce no more or less in weight
Now here s the trick the way of wh ch I ll state!
He shaped his mould in length and breadth to be
L ke to the ta n of s lver as you see

And n the bowl of water then d d cast
The mould and all and bade the pr est at last

Of s lver fine and glad you cannot doubt
Was th s pr est when he saw that t was so

But and ye vouche sauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtilitee
I wol be youre in al that ever I mayl
Quod the chanoun yet wol I make assay
The second tyme that ye may taken hede
And been expert of this and in your nede
Another day assaye in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science
Lat take another ounce quod he tho

When I am absent on another day
You may this sc ence and ts arts essay
Qu cks lver take sa d he one ounce no more
As you ll remember that we d d befo e

The canon long and hard he b ew the fire
To br ng about the thing he d d des re
And th s sa d canon wa ted all the wh le
Al ready there the poor pr est to begu le
And for assurance n h s hand d d bea
A hollo v s ck (take heed s rs and beware!)
In end of wh ch an ounce as and no more,
Of s lver filings put all as before
W hin the coal and stopped with wax a b t
To keep the filings in the hole of t
And hile the pr est was busy as I s y
This canon draw ng close got in h s way
And unobserved he threw the powder in
Just as before (the Dev l from his sk n

[1]A thin slice

And quickly in the crucible it fell
Good sirs what better do you wish than well?
[illegible]
And to the canon he did proffer soon
Body and goods Yea was the canon s tune
Though I am poor I m artful as you ll find
I warn you plainly there s yet more behind
Is there some copper in your place? asked he
Yea said the priest I think there may well be
If not go buy us some and quickly too
Good sir make haste and fetch us it pray do
He went his way and with the copper came
And in his hands this canon took the same
And of the copper weighed out but an ounce
My tongue is far too simple to pronounce
As servant to my wit the doubleness
Within this canon root of wickedness
Friendly he seemed to those that knew him not
But he was fiendly both in heart and thought
It wearies me to tell of h s falseness
Nevertheless yet will I it express
To end that all men may be warned thereby,
And for no other reason truthfully
Within the crucible he puts the ounce
Of copper which upon the fire he mounts
And casts in powder making the priest blow
And at h s labouring to stoop down low,
All as before and all was but a jape
Just as he pleased he made the priest his ape
And afterward into the mould he cast
The copper into the water pan at last
Plunging the whole and thrust therein his hand
And in his sleeve (as you did understand
Before) he had a certain s lver tain
He slyly took it out this damned villain
Wh le still the priest saw noth ng of the plan
And left it in the bottom of the pan
And in the water groped he to and fro
And very stealthily took up also
The copper tain of which the priest knew naught,
And h ding it he by the breast him caught
And spoke to him thus carrying on his game
Stoop lower down by God you are to blame!
Come help me now as I did you wh lere
Put in your hand and search and learn what s there
This priest took up the silver tain anon
And then the canon said Let us be gone
With these three plates the wh ch we have so wrought
To some goldsmith to learn if they re worth aught
For by my faith I wouldn t for my hood
Have them save they are silver fine and good
And that immediately proved shall be
Unto the goldsmith then with these tains three,
They went and put the metal in assay

And in the croslet hastily it fel
Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest thus was bigyled ageyn,
Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to seyn,
He was so glad, that I can nat expresse
In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse,
And to the chanoun he profred eftsone
'Ye," quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel ther be'
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce
Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,
As ministre of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse
He semed freendly to hem that knewe him noght,
But he was feendly bothe in herte and thoght
It wericth me to telle of his falsnesse,
And nathelees yet wol I it expresse,
To th'entente that men may be war therby,
And for noon other cause, trewely
He putte his ounce of coper in the croslet,
And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,
And caste in poudre, and made the preest to blowe,
And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,
As he dide er, and al nas but a jape,
Right as him liste, the preest he made his ape,
And afterward in th'ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it at the laste
Of water, and in he putte his owene hond
And in his sleve (as ye biforn hond
Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne
He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne—
Unwiting this preest of his false craft—
And in the pannes botme he hath it laft,
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder prively took up also
The coper teyne, noght knowing this preest,
And hidde it and him hente by the breest,
And to him spak, and thus seyde in his game,
"Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,
Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,
Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther"
This preest took up this silver teyne anon,
And thanne seyde the chanoun, 'lat us gon
With thise three teynes, which that we han wroght,
To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght

Ne knyght in armes to doon an hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady dere,
Than had this preest this sory craft to lere,
And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde,
"For love of god ...

I warne yow wel, for, save I and a frere,
In Engelond ther can no man it make."
"No fors ...

yet
Yet hadde I lever ...

preest,
Quod the chanoun ...

And to the canon thus he spoke and said
For love of God Who for us all was dead

Truly said he it is right dear I say
Sir in one word if this thing you will have
You shall pay forty pounds so God me save!
And were it not for friendship own ere this
To me you should pay more than that ywis
This priest the sum of forty pounds anon
In nobles fetched and gave them every one
To this said canon for this said receipt
His business was all fraud and all deceit
Sir priest he said I do not care to lose
My secret craft and I would twere kept close

What say?

Replied the canon farewell many thanks
He went and never the priest this mountebank s
Face saw thereafter and when this priest would
Make his own test at such time as he could
Of this receipt farewell! it would not be!
Lo thus bejaped and thus beguiled was he!
And thus he had his introduction in
The way men fall to ruin and to sin
Consider sirs how that in each estate

And in vague cant set their desire and pain

But to their purpose shall they ne'er attain.
A man may easily learn, if he have aught,
To multiply, and bring his wealth to naught.
  Lo, such a gain is in this pleasant game!
A *man's mirth it will turn to grief and shame,*
And it will empty great and heavy purses
And causes alchemists to get the curses
Of all of those who thereunto have lent.
O fie! For shame! Those who the fire resent,
Alas! can they not flee the fire's fierce heat?
If you have tried it, leave it, I repeat,
Lest you lose all; better than never is late.
Never to thrive at all were a long date.
And though you prowl, you never gold shall find,
You are as bold as Bayard[1] is, the blind,
That blunders forth and thinks of danger none;
He is as bold to run against a stone
As to go ambling down the broad highway.
And so fare you who multiply, I say.
If your two fleshly eyes can't see aright,
Look to it that your mind lack not for sight.
For, though you look about and though you stare,
You shall not win a mite in traffic there,
But you shall waste all you may scrape and turn.
Avoid that fire, lest much too fast it burn;
Meddle no more with that base art, I mean,
For if you do, you'll lose your savings clean.
  And now I'll tell you briefly, if I may,
What the philosophers about this say.
  Arnold of Villanovana I will cite;
In his *Rosarium* he brings to light
These facts, and says—in this I do not lie:
  "No man can mercury ever mortify,
Unless its brother's aid to it he bring."
And also he who first did say this thing
Was father of philosophers, Hermes;
He said the dragon, doubtless, takes his ease
And never dies, unless there's also slain
His brother, which, to make the matter plain,
Means, by the dragon, mercury, none other,
And brimstone's understood *to mean the brother*,
That out of *Sol* and *Luna* we can draw.
And therefore," said he, "give *heed to my saw*,
Let no man busy him ever with this art
Unless philosophers to him impart
Their meaning clearly, for unless he can
Their language grasp, he's but an ignorant man.
This science and this learning, too," said he,
"*Must ever the most secret secrets be.*"
  Also there was a student of Plato
Who on a time said to his master so,
As his book *Senior* will bear witness,
And this was his demand, in truthfulness:
"*Tell me the name, sir, of the Secret Stone.*"
  And Plato answered in this wise anon:
"Take, now, the stone that Titanos men name."
  "What's that?" asked he. "Magnesia is the
    same."
Plato replied. "Yea, sir, and is it thus?
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is magnesia, good sir, I do pray?"

But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
To multiplye, and bringe his good to naught!
  Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,
A mannes mirthe it wol torne un-to grame,
And empten also grete and hevy purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.
O! fy! for shame! they that han been brent,
Allas! can they nat flee the fyres hete?
Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,
Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is late.
Never to thryve were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never finde;
Ye been as bolde as is Bayard[1] the blinde,
That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon
As for to goon besydes in the weye.
So faren ye that multiplye, I seye.
If that your yën can nat seen aright,
Loke that your minde lakke nought his sight.
For, though ye loke never so brode, and stare,
Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,
For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful clene.
  And right as swythe I wol yow tellen here,
What philosophres seyn in this matere.
  Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencioun;
He seith right thus, with-outen any lye,
"Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,
But it be *with his brother knowleching*.
How that he, which that first seyde this thing,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragoun, doutelees,
Ne deyeth nat, but if that he be slayn
With his brother, and that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other
He understood; and brimstoon by *his brother*,
That out of *sol* and *luna* were y-drawe.
And therfor,' seyde he, 'tak *heed to my sawe*,
Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,
But if that he th'entencioun and speche
Of philosophres understonde can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
For this science and this conning," quod he,
'Is of the secree of secrees, pardé.'"
  Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witnesse,
And this was his demande in soothfastnesse:
'*Tel me the name of the privy stoon?*'
  And Plato answerde unto him anoon,
"Tak the stoon that Titanos men name."
  "Which is that?" quod he. "Magnesia is the
    same,"
Seyde Plato. "Ye, sir, and is it thus?
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow preye?"

[1]Common name for a horse

The philosophres sworn were everichoon,
That they sholden discovere it un-to noon,
Ne in no book it wryte in no manere,
For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere
That he wol nat that it discovered be,
But wher it lyketh to his deitee
Man for t'enspyre, and eek for to defende
Whom that him lyketh, lo, this is the ende."

still
Philosophers are sworn, aye, every one,
That they will thus discover it to none,
Nor in a book will write it for men here,
For unto Christ it is so lief and dear
That He wills that it not discovered be,
Save where it's pleasing to His deity
Man to inspire, and also, to defend
Whom that He will and lo, this is the end
And thus do I conclude Since God in Heaven
Wills that philosophers shall not say even
How any man may come upon that stone,
I say, as for the best, let it alone
For whoso makes of God his adversary,
To work out anything that is contrary
To what He wills, he ll surely never thrive,
Though he should multiply while he's alive
And there's the end, for finished is my tale
May God s salvation to no good man fail!
Amen

HERE IS ENDED THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE

THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE MANCIPLE'S TALE

Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,
That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?
A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and binde.

sorwe,
What eyleth thee *to slepe by the morwe?*

As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse
Noot I nat why, that me were lever sl
Than the beste galoun wyn in Chepe
'Wel," quod the maunciple, "if it
To thee, sir cook, and to no wight dis
Which that heer rydeth in this compa

Do you not know where stands a little town
That s called by all about Bob-up and down,
Under the Blean, down Canterbury way?
There did our host begin to jape and play,
And he said ' Sirs, what! Dun is in the mire![1]
Is there no man then, who, for prayer or hire,
Will wake our comrade who's so far behind?
A thief might easily rob him and bind
See how he's nodding! See now by Cock's bones,
As if he d fall down from his horse at once
Is that a cook of London with mischance?

morrow!

And if our host will, of his courtesy,
I will, for now, excuse you from your tale,
For in good faith, your visage is full pale,
Your eyes are bleary also, as I think,
And I know well your breath right sour does stink,
All of which shows that you are far from well,
No flattering lies about you will I tell.
See how he yawns. Just look, the drunken wight,
As if he'd swallow all of us outright.
Now close your mouth, man, by your father's kin.
Ah, may Hell's devil set his foot therein!
Your cursed breath will soon infect us all.
Fie, stinking swine, fie! *Evil you befall!*
Ah, take you heed, sirs, of this lusty man.
Now, sweet sir, would you like to ride at fan?[1]
It seems to me you're in the proper shape!
You've drunk the wine that makes a man an ape,
And that is *when a man plays with a straw*."
The cook grew wroth, for this had touched the raw,
And at the manciple he nodded fast
For lack of speech, and him his horse did cast,
And there he lay till up the rest him took,
Which was a feat of riding for a cook!
Alas! That he had kept not to his ladle!
For ere he was again within his saddle
There was a mighty shoving to and fro
To lift him up, and hugeous care and woe,
So all unwieldy was this sorry ghost.
And to the manciple then spoke our host:
"Since drink has got such utter domination
Over this fellow here, by my salvation,
I think that badly he would tell his tale.
For whether wine or old or musty ale
Is what he's drunk, he speaks all through his nose,
He snorts hard and with cold he's lachrymose.
Also he has more than enough to do
To keep him and his nag out of the slough,
And if he fall down off his horse again,
We'll all have quite enough of labour then
In lifting up his heavy drunken corse.
Tell on your tale, he matters not, of course.
"Yet, manciple, in faith, you are not wise
Thus openly to chide him for his vice.
Some day he'll get revenge, you may be sure,
And call you like a falcon to the lure;
I mean he'll speak of certain little things,
As, say, to point out in your reckonings
Things not quite honest, were they put to proof."
"Nay," said the manciple, "that were ill behoof!
So might he easily catch me in his snare.
Yet would I rather pay him for the mare
Which he rides on than have him with me strive;
I will not rouse his rage, so may I thrive!
That which I said, I said as jesting word;
And know you what? I have here, in a gourd,
A draught of wine, yea, of a good ripe grape,
And now anon you shall behold a jape.

And that our host wol, of his curteisye,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale,
For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
Thyn yën daswen eek, as that me thinketh,
And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stinketh,
That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed,
Of me, certein, thou shalt nat been y-glosed.
Se how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight,
As though he wolde us swolwe anon right.
Hold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kin!
The devel of helle sette his foot ther-in!
Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle;
Fy, stinking swyn, fy! foule moot thee falle!
A! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.
Now, swete sir, wol ye justen atte fan?[1]
Ther-to me thinketh ye been wel y-shape!
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
And that is whan men pleyen with a straw."
And with this speche the cook wex wrooth and wraw,
And on the manciple he gan nodde faste
For lakke of speche, and doun the hors him caste,
Wher as he lay, til that men up him took;
This was a fayr chivachee of a cook!
Allas! he nadde holde him by his ladel!
And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
Ther was greet showving bothe to and fro,
To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweldy was this sory palled gost.
And to the manciple thanne spak our host,
"By-cause drink hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.
For, were it wyn, or old or moysty ale,
That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
He hath also to do more than y-nough
To kepe him and his capel out of slough;
And, if he falle from his capel eft-sone,
Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,
In lifting up his hevy dronken cors.
Telle on thy tale, of him make I no fors.
But yet, manciple, in feith thou art to nyce,
Thus openly repreve him of his vyce.
Another day he wol, peraventure,
Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure;
I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,
As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
That wer not honeste, if it cam to preef."
"No," quod the manciple, "that were a greet mescheef!
So mighte he lightly bringe me in the snare.
Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare
Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve;
I wol nat wratthe him, al so mote I thryve!
That that I spak, I seyde it in my bourde;
And wite ye what? I have heer, in a gourde,
A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.

[1] A vane or quintain. To ride at fan (or at quintain) was to tilt at a board at one end of a pivoted crossbar, at the other end of which was suspended a sandbag. The object was to strike the board with the lance and to escape being hit by the sandbag.

What neded him? he drank y-nough biforn
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn
To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn,
And of that drinke the cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked him in swich wyse as he coude
Than gan our host to laughen wonder loude,
And seyde, 'I see wel, it is necessarie,

That so canst turnen ernest in to game!
Worship and thank be to thy deitee!
Of that matere ye gete na more of me
Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye "
"Wel sir,' quod he, now herkneth what I seye."

He gave the manciple the gourd again
And of that drink the cook was wondrous fain
And thanked him then in such wise as he could
Then did our host break into laughter loud
And said I see well it is necessary

O Bacchus thou all blessed be thy name

say

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE MANCIPLE

THE MANCIPLE'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE MANCIPLE'S TALE OF THE CROW

WHAN Phebus dwelled here in this erthe adoun,
As olde bokes maken mencioun,
He was the moste lusty bachiler[1]
In al this world, and eek the beste archer,

Pleyen he coude on every minstralcye,
And singen that it was a melodye,
To heren of his clere vois the soun
Certes the king of Thebes Amphioun,

And countrefete the speche of every man
He coude, whan he sholde telle a tale
Ther with in al this world no nightingale

WHEN Phoebus once on earth was dwelling here
As in the ancient books it is made clear
He was the lustiest of bachelors[1]
In all this world and even the best archer
He slew Python the serpent as he lay

He played all instruments of minstrelsy

Perfect he was in every worthiness

And taught to speak as men may teach a jay
White was this crow as is a snow white swan

Could by a hundred thousandth part they tell
Carol and sing so merrily and well.
  Now had this Phoebus in his house a wife
Whom he loved better than he loved his life,
And night and day he used much diligence
To please her and to do her reverence,
Save only, if it's truth that I shall say,
Jealous he was and so did guard her aye
For he was very loath befooled to be,
And so is everyone in such degree;
But all in vain, for it avails one naught.
A good wife, who is clean in deed and thought,
Should not be kept a prisoner, that's plain;
And certainly the labour is in vain
That guards a slut, for, sirs, it just won't be.
This hold I for an utter idiocy,
That men should lose their labour guarding wives;
So say these wise old writers in their lives.
  But now to purpose, as I first began:
This worthy Phoebus did all that a man
Could do to please, thinking that by such pleasures
And by his manhood and his other measures
To make her love him and keep faithful, too.
But God knows well that nothing man may do
Will ever keep restrained a thing that nature
Has made innate in any human creature.
  Take any bird and put it in a cage
And do your best affection to engage
And rear it tenderly with meat and drink
Of all the dainties that you can bethink,
And always keep it cleanly as you may;
Although its cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet would this bird, by twenty thousand fold,
Rather, within a forest dark and cold,
Go to eat worms and all such wretchedness.
For ever this bird will do his business
To find some way to get outside the wires.
Above all things his freedom he desires.
  Or take a cat, and feed him well with milk
And tender flesh, and make his bed of silk,
And let him see a mouse go by the wall;
Anon he leaves the milk and flesh and all
And every dainty that is in that house,
Such appetite has he to eat a mouse.
Desire has here its mighty power shown,
And inborn appetite reclaims its own.
  A she-wolf also has a vulgar mind;
The wretchedest he-wolf that she may find,
Or least of reputation, she'll not hate
Whenever she's desirous of a mate.
  All these examples speak I of these men
Who are untrue, and not of sweet women.
For men have aye a lickerish appetite
On lower things to do their base delight
Than on their wives, though they be ne'er so fair
And ne'er so true and ne'er so debonair.
Flesh is so fickle, lusting beyond measure,
That we in no one thing can long have pleasure
Or virtuous keep more than a little while.
  This Phoebus, who was thinking of no guile,
He was deceived, for all his quality,
For under him a substitute had she,

Ne coude, by an hondred thousand deel,
Singen so wonder merily and weel.
  Now had this Phebus in his hous a wyf,
Which that he lovede more than his lyf,
And night and day dide ever his diligence
Hir for to plese, and doon hir reverence,
Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,
Jalous he was, and wolde have kept hir fayn;
For him were looth by-japed for to be.
And so is every wight in swich degree;
But al in ydel, for it availleth noght.
A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thoght,
Sholde nat been kept in noon awayt, certayn;
And trewely, the *labour is in vayn*
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol nat be.
This holde I for a verray nycetee,
To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lyves.
  But now to purpos, as I first bigan.
This worthy Phebus dooth all that he can
To plesen hir, weninge by swich plesaunce,
And for his manhede and his governaunce,
That no man sholde han put him from hir grace.
But god it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to destreyne a thing, which that nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature.
  Tak any brid, and put it in a cage,
And do al thyn entente and thy corage
To fostre it tendrely with mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,
And keep it al-so clenly as thou may;
Al-though his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever in a forest, that is rude and cold,
Gon ete wormes and swich wrecchednesse.
For ever this brid wol doon his bisinesse
To escape out of his cage, if he may;
His libertee this brid desireth ay.
  Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with milk,
And tendre flesh, and make his couche of silk,
And lat him seen a mous go by the wal;
Anon he weyveth milk, and flesh, and al,
And every deyntee that is in that hous,
Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous.
Lo, here hath lust his dominacioun,
And appetyt flemeth discrecioun.
  A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;
The lewedeste wolf that she may finde,
Or leest of reputacion wol she take,
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.
  Alle thise ensamples speke I by thise men
That been untrewe, and no-thing by wommen.
For men han ever a likerous appetyt
On lower thing to parfourne hir delyt
Than on hir wyves, be they never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,
That we ne conne in no-thing han plesaunce
That souneth in-to vertu any whyle.
  This Phebus, which that thoghte upon no gyle,
Deceyved was, for al his jolitee,
For under him another hadde she,

A man of l ttle reputat on one
Worth naught to Phoebus by compar son
T

H
Her leman? Truly t s a knav sh speech!
Forg ve t me I do ndeed be eech
Tl e vise old Plato says as you may read
T

And a poor unkno vn vench other than this—
If t be true that both do what s amiss—
The gentle oman in her state above
She shall be called his lady in their lo e
And s nce the other s but a poor voman
Sl e shall be called his wench or h s leman
And God kno s very well my o n dear brother
Men lay the one as low as lies the o her
Between a tyrant or usurp ng chief
And any ou la ved man or errant thief
It s just the same there s no d fference
One told to Alexander th s sentence
That since the tyrant is of greater m ght
By fo ce of numbers to slay men outr ght
And bu n down house and home e en as a plane
Lo! for that he s a captain that s certa n
And s nce the outlaw has small company
And may no do so g eat a harm as he
Nor br ng a nat on nto such great gr ef
Why he s called but an outla v or a thief.

At o e ney w ought a o their ber iage
And the white crow aye hanging n the cage
Saw vhat they d d and never sa d a wo d
And vhen aga n came Phoebus home the lo d
Th s crow sang loud Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
What b rd? asked Phoebus What song now s ng you?

singestow?
Ne were

or al thy beautee and thy gentilesse
For al thy song and al thy minstralcye
For al thy waiting blered is thyn ye
W h oon of litel reputacioun
Noght worth to thee as in compar soun
The mo

Forme ly applied to e the sex

How that his wife had done her lechery
To his great shame and with great villainy,
Repeating that he'd seen it with his eyes
Then Phoebus turned away in sad surprise
He thought his wretched heart would break for woe
His bow he bent and set there-in an arrow
And in his angry mood his wife did slay
This the result, there is no more to say
For grief of which he ceased his minstrelsy
Broke harp and lute, gittern and psaltery
And, too, he broke his arrows and his bow
And after that he spoke thus to the crow
"Traitor," cried he, "with tongue of scorpion
You have brought me to ruin, treacherous one!
Alas, that I was born! Why died I not?
O my dear wife, jewel of joy, God wot,
Who were to me so trusty and so true
Now you lie dead, with face all pale of hue
And you were guiltless, I dare swear to this!
O hasty hand, to do so foul amiss!
O stupid brain, O anger all reckless
That unadvisedly struck the guiltless!
O ill distrust that jealousy had sown!
Where were your thought and your discretion flown?
O every man, beware of hastiness
Do not believe without a strong witness
Strike not too soon, before you reason why
And be advised full well and soberly
Ere you do any execution thus
In your wild anger when it is jealous
Alas, *a thousand folk has hasty ire*
Ruined, and left them bleeding in the mire
Alas, I'll slay myself forthwith for grief!"
And to the crow he said, "O you false thief!
I will anon requite you that false tale!
You sang but lately like a nightingale
Now, you false thief, your songs are over and done
And you shall all those white feathers lose, each one
Nor ever in your life *more* shall you speak
Thus men on traitors shall their justice wreak
You and your offspring ever shall be black
Nor evermore sweet noises shall you *make*
But you shall cry in tempest and in rain
In token that through you my wife was slain."
And on the crow he leaped, and that anon,
And plucked out his white feathers, every one
And made him black, and stilled for evermore
His song and speech and flung him out the door
Unto the devil, where I leave this jack
And for this reason now all crows are black
Masters, by this example I do pray
You will beware and heed what I shall say
Never tell any man, through all your life
How that another man has humped his wife,
He'll hate you mortally, and that's certain
Dan Solomon, as these wise clerks explain
Teaches a man to keep his *tongue from all*
But, as I said, I am not textual
Nevertheless, thus taught me my good dame
"My son, think of the crow, in high God's name

How that his wyf had doon hir lecherye,
Him to gret shame and to gret vileinye,
And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his yën
This *Phebus* gan aweyward for to wryen,
Him thoughte his sorweful herte brast a two,
His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a flo,
And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn
This is th'effect, ther is na more to sayn,
For sorwe of which he brak his minstralcye,
Bothe harpe, and lute, and giterne, and sautrye,
And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe
And after that, thus spak he to the crowe
"Traitour," quod he, "with tonge of scorpioun,
Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!
Allas! that I was wroght! why nere I deed?
O dere wyf! O gemme of lustiheed,
That were to me so sad and eek so trew,
Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,
Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, y-wis!
O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!
O trouble wit, O ire recchelees,
That unavysed smytest giltelees!
O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun,
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,
Ne trowe no-thing with-outen strong witnesse,
Smyt nat to sone, er that ye witen why,
And beeth avysed wel and sobrely
Er ye doon any execucioun,
Up-on your ire, for suspecioun.
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire.
Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!"
And to the crowe, "O false theef!" seyde he,
"I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!
Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale,
Now shaltow, false theef, thy song forgon,
And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon
Ne never in al thy lyf ne shaltou speke
Thus shal men on a traitour been awreke,
Thou and thyn of-spring ever shul be blake,
Ne never swete noise shul ye *make*,
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn
In tokeninge that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn."
And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,
And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon,
And made him blak, and refte him al his song,
And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong
Un-to the devel, which I him bitake
And for this caas been alle crowes blake —
Lordings, by this ensample I yow preye,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what I seye
Ne telleth never no man in your lyf
How that another man hath dight his wyf,
He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn
Daun Salomon, as wyse clerkes seyn
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel,
But as I seyde, I am noght textuel
But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame:
"My sone, thenk on the crowe, a goddes name,

My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep thy freend

For man sholde him avyse what he speke.
My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,
Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes teche;
But for a litel speche avysely
Is no men shent, to speke generally
My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne
At alle tyme, but whan thou doost thy peyne
To speke of god, in honour and preyere
The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt lere,
Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge —
Thus lerne children whan that they ben yonge —
My sone, of muchel speking yvel-avysed,
Ther lasse speking hadde y-nough suffysed,

Thee thar nath drede for to be biwreyd,

Of tydinges, whether they ben false or trewe
Wher-so thou come, amonges hye or lowe,
Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk up-on the crowe"

My, son keep your tongue still, and keep your friend

cheeks

Is no man harmed, to put it generally
My son, your foolish tongue you should restrain
At all times, save those when your soul is fain

A many an arm in two, dear son, just so

My son, speak not, but merely bow your head
Dissemble like one deaf, if you but hear

To be betrayed you need not ever dread,

HERE IS ENDED THE MANCIPLE'S TALE OF THE CROW

THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARSON'S TALE

By that the maunciple hadde his tale al ended,
The sonne fro the south lyne was descended
So lowe, that he nas nat, to my sighte,
Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte
Foure of the clokke it was tho, as I gesse
For eleven foot, or litel more or lesse,
My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there,
Of swich feet as my lengthe parted were

WHAT time the manciple his tale had ended,
The sun down from the south line had descended
So low that he was not, unto my sight,

In six foot equal parts as I have shown
Therewith the moon's high exaltation known
I mean the sign of Libra did ascend
As we were entering a village end
Whereat our host since wont to guide was he
As in this case our jolly company
Said in this wise Now masters, every one
We lack no tales except a single one
My judgment is fulfilled and my decree
I think that we have heard from each degree
Almost fulfilled is all my ordinance
I pray to God to give him right good chance
Who tells to us this story pleasantly
Sir priest he asked can you a vicar be?
Are you a parson? Tell truth by your fay!
Be what you will break not our jolly play
For every man save you, has told his tale
Unbuckle show us what is in your mail
For truly I think judging by your cheer
You should knit up a mighty matter here
Tell us a fable now by Cock's dear bones!
  This parson then replied to him at once
You'll get no foolish fable told by me
For Paul when writing unto Timothy
Reproves all those that veer from truthfulness
And tell false fables and such wretchedness
Why should I sow chaff out of my own fist
When I may sow good wheat if I but list?
But if, I say you something wish to hear
In which the moral virtues will appear
And if you now will give me audience
I will right gladly in Christ's reverence
Give you such lawful pleasure as I can
But trust me since I am a Southern man
I can't romance with rum ram ruff[1] by letter
And God knows rhyme I hold but little better
But if you wish the truth made plain and straight,
A pleasant tale in prose I will relate
To weave our feast together at the end
May Jesus, of His grace the wit me send
To show you as we journey this last stage
The way of that most perfect pilgrimage
To heavenly Jerusalem on high
And if you will vouchsafe anon shall I
Begin my tale concerning which I pray
Choose what you will I can no better say
Yet this my meditation is I own
Perhaps not free from errors to be shown
By clerks, since I am not a learned man
I do but grasp the meaning as I can
Therefore I do protest I shall prepare
To take what comes and all correction bear
  When he had spoken thus, we all agreed
For as it seemed to us, twas right indeed
To end with something virtuous in its sense
And so to give him time and audience
We bade our host that he to him convey
The wish of all that he began straightway
  Our host he had the very words for all
'Sir priest said he may good to you befall!
Say what you wish and we will gladly hear'

In six feet equal of proporcioun
Ther with the mones exaltacioun,
I mene Libra, alwey gan ascende,
As we were entringe at a thropes ende,
For which our host, as he was wont to gye,
As in this caas, our joly companye,
Seyde in this wyse, "lordings everichoon,
Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon
Fulfild is my sentence and my decree,
I trowe that we han herd of ech degree
Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce,
I prey to god, so yeve him right good chaunce,
That telleth this tale to us lustily
Sir preest," quod he, "artow a vicary?
Or art a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!
Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our pley;
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale,
Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy male,
For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,
Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet matere
Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'
  This Persone him answerde, al at ones,
'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me,
For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,
Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse,
And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse
Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?
For which I seye, if that yow list to here
Moralitee and vertuous matere,
And thanne that ye wol yeve me audience,
I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence,
Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I can
But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,
I can nat geste—rum, ram, ruf[1]—by lettre,
Ne, god wot, rym holde I but litel bettre,
And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat glose
I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose
To knitte up al this feeste, and make an ende
And Jesu, for his grace, wit me sende
To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage
That highte Jerusalem celestial
And, if ye vouche-sauf, anon I shal
Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye
Telle your avys, I can no bettre seye
But nathelees, this meditacioun
I putte it ay under correccioun
Of clerkes, for I am nat textuel,
I take but the sentence, trusteth wel
Therfor I make protestacioun
That I wol stonde to correccioun."
  Up-on this word we han assented sone,
For, as us semed, it was for to done,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to yeve him space and audience,
And bede our host he sholde to him seye,
That alle we to telle his tale him preye
  Our host hadde the wordes for us alle—
'Sir preest,' quod he, 'now fayre yow bifalle!
Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly here'—

[1] Nonsense words to imitate and mock at alliteration

And w th that word he seyde in thus manere—
"Telleth quod he 'your meditacioun
But hasteth yow the sonne wol adoun
Beth fructuous and that in litel space
And to do wel god sende yow his grace!

And after that he added for his ear
Tell us, he sa d your med tation gro n
But pray make haste the sun will soon be down
Be fru tful tell us in a l ttle space
And to do well God send to you H s grace!

HERE ENDETH THE PROEM

THE PARSON'S TALE

HERE BEGINNETH THE PARSON'S TALE

Jer 6° State super vias et v d te et interrogate de viis antiquis que sit via bona et ambulate in ea et inuen etis refrigerium animabus vestris &c

1 Our swete lord god of hevene that no man wol perisse but wole that we comen alle to the knoweleche of him and to the blisful lyf that is perdurable amonesteth us by the prophete Jeremie that seith in this wyse stondeth upon the weyes and

and

estial and

been the accions of werkinges of Penitence and how manye spyces ther been of Penitence and whiche thinges apertenen and bihoven to Penitence and whiche thinges destourben Penitence

2 Seint Ambrose se th that Penitence is the pleyninge of man for the gilt that he hath doon and na more to do any thing for which him oghte to pleyne And som doctour se th Penitence is the waymentinge of man that sorweth for his sinne and pyneth himself for he hath misdoon Penitence with certeyne circumstances is verray repentance of a man that halt him self in sorwe and other peyne for hise giltes And for he shal be verray penitent he shal first b wailen the s nnes that he hath doon

goode werkes or elles his repentance may nat availle For as se th seint Is dre he is a japer and a gabb f oone

may arise thurgh Penitence if he have grace but certeinly it is greet doute For as se th Seint Gregorie unnethe aryseth he out of s nne that s charged w th the charge of yvel usage And there

OURS eet Lord God of Heaven Who will destroy

ear a u ju e w a m l ear n order that he may learn what penitence s and why t is called pen tence and in how many ways pen tence func t ons and ho v many k nds of pen tence there are and what things apperta n and are necessary to pen tence and what th ngs hinder t

Sa nt Ambrose says that pen tence s the mourn ing of man for the s n that he has done and the re

under certa n c rcumstances is the true repentance

sin and abandon sin ere sin abandon them Holy Church holds them to be sure of their salvation And he that sins and verily repents in his last moments Holy Church yet hopes for his salvation what of the great mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ because of *his repentance but take you the certain way*

And now since I have declared unto you what penitence is now shall you understand that there are three deeds required by penitence The first deed is that a man be baptized after he has sinned *Saint* Augustine says Save he be repentant for his former sinful life *he shall not begin to lead the new clean life* For truly if he be baptized without repentance for his old offence he receives the sign of baptism but not the grace nor the remission of his sins until he have true repentance Another defect is this, that *men do deadly sin after they have received baptism* The third defect is that men fall into venial sins after their baptism and from day to day Thereof Saint Augustine says that " penitence of good and humble folk is the penitence of every day

The kinds of penitence are three One of them is *public another is general and the third is private* That form of penitence which is public is of two kinds as to be expelled from Holy Church in Lent for the slaughter of children and such like things Another is when a man has sinned openly of which *sin the shame is openly spoken of in the community* and then Holy Church by judgment rendered constrains him to do open penance Common or general penitence is when priests enjoin men collectively in certain cases as peradventure to go naked on pilgrimages or barefoot Private penitence is that which men do continually for their sins whereof we con*fess privately and receive a private penance*

Now shall you understand what is necessary to a true and perfect penitence And this stands upon three things contrition of heart confession by word *of mouth and restitution As to which Saint John* Chrysostom says Penitence constrains a man to accept cheerfully every pain that is put upon him with contrition of heart and oral confession with restitution and in doing all of acts of humility *And this is a fruitful penitence for three things wherein we anger Our Lord Jesus Christ that is to say by delight in thinking by recklessness in speaking* and by wicked sinful works And over against these wicked offences is penitence which may be likened unto a tree

*The root of this tree is contrition which hides it*self away in the heart of him who is truly repentant, just as the root of another tree hides within the earth From the root contrition springs a trunk that bears branches and leaves of confession and the fruit of penance as to which *Christ says in His gospel* Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance " *For by this fruit may men know this tree and not* by the root that is hidden in the heart of man nor

fore repentant folk, that stinte for to sinne, and forlete sinne er that sinne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker of hir savacioun And he that sinneth, and verraily repenteth him in his laste ende, holy chirche yet hopeth his savacioun, by *the grete mercy of oure lord Jesu Crist, for his repentaunce*, but tak the siker wey

3 And now, sith I have declared yow what thing is Penitence, now shul ye understonde that ther been three acciouns of Penitence The firste accioun of Penitence is, that a man be baptized after that he hath sinned Seint Augustin seith "but he be *penitent for his olde sinful lyf, he may nat biginne* the newe clene lif " For certes, if he be baptized withouten penitence of his olde gilt, he receiveth the mark of baptisme, but nat the grace ne the remission of his sinnes, til he have repentance verray *Another defaute is thus, that men doon deedly* sinne after that they han received baptisme The thridde defaute is, that men fallen in venial sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to day Ther of seith Seint Augustin, that " penitence of goode and humble folk is the penitence of every day "

4 The spyces of Penitence been three That oon *of hem is solempne, another is commune, and the* thridde is privee Thilke penance that is solempne, is in two maneres, as to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of children, and swich maner thing Another is, whan a man hath sinned openly, of which sinne the fame is openly spoken in the contree, and thanne holy chirche by jugement destreineth him for to do open penaunce Commune penaunce is that preestes enjoinen men comunly in certeyn caas, as for to goon, peraventure, naked in pilgrimages, or bare foot Privee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for privee *sinnes, of whiche we shryve us prively and receyve* privee penaunce

5 Now shaltow understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray parfit Penitence And this stant on three thinges, Contricioun of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and Satisfaccioun For which seith Seint John Crisostom "Penitence destreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enjoyned, with contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccion, and in werkinge of alle maner humilitee " And this is fruitful Penitence agayn three thinges in whiche we wratthe oure lord Jesu Crist this is to seyn, by delyt in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse in spekinge, and by wikked sinful werkinge And agayns thise wikkede giltes is Penitence, that may be lykned un to a tree

6. The rote of this tree is Contricion, that hydeth him in the herte of him that is verray repentant, right as the rote of a tree hydeth him in the erthe Of the rote of Contricion springeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leves of Confession, *and fruit of Satisfaccion For which Crist seith in* his gospel "dooth digne fruit of Penitence", for by this fruit may men knowe this tree, and nat by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the

braunches ne by the leves of Confess on And therefore oure Lord Jesu Crist se th thus by the fruit of hem ye shul knowen hem Of this rote eek spryngeth a seed of grace the which seed is moder of sikernesse and this seed is egre and hoot The grace of this seed spryngeth of god thurgh remembrance of the day of dome and on the peynes of hel e Of this matere seith Salomon that in the drede of god man forleteth his sinne The hete of this seed is the love of god and the des ring of the oye perdurable This hete draweth the herte

matter says Solomon "Fear the Lo d and depa t from ev l The heat of this seed s the love of God and the des r ng of the joy everlas ng Th s heat

t s medled with other mete Right so the sinful man that loveth his sinne him semeth that t is to him most swete of any thing but fro that tyme tha h h

when t is mingled w th other food Just so to the s nful man who loves his s n it seems that s

seith. I have loved thy lawe and hated w kked nesse and hate he that loveth god kepeth his lawe and his word This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit up-on the avis on of the k ng Na bugodonosor whan he conseiled him to do peni tence Penaunce s the tree of lyf to hem that t receiven and he that holdeth him in verray peni tence s blessed after the sentence of Salomon

rece ve t and he t is blessed accord ng to the op n on of Solomon

7 In this Penitence or Contricion man shal un derstonde foure thinges that s to seyn what s Contricion and whiche been the causes that moeven a man to Contricion, and how he sholde be con trit and what Contr cion availleth to the soule Thanne s it thus that Contric on is the verray sorwe that a man rece veth in his herte for his sinnes w th sad purpos to shryve him and to do penaunce and nevermore to do sinne And this sorwe shal been in this manere as se th seint Ber nard. " t shal been hevy and grevous and ful sharpe and po nant in herte First for man hath agilt his lord and his creatour and more sharpe and poinant for he hath agilt his fader celestial and yet more sl arpe and poinant for he hath wrathed and agilt him that boghte him which with his precious blood hath del vered us fro the bondes of sinne and fro the crueltee of the devel and fro the peynes of helle

tion s the real so row that a man recei es w hin his

and yet more sha p and po gnant because he has an

8 The causes that oghte moeve a man to Con tricion been six First a man shal remembre him of hise sinnes but loke he that thilke remembrance

that ye sinned ye were the children of god and limes of the regne of god but for your sinne ye been woxen thral and foul and membres of the

For befo e that t me when first you s nned you were the ch ld en of God and members of the K ng dom of God but becau e of your s n you a e be come slav h and le and the children of the Fiend

returns to his vomit And you are even yet more vile, for your long continuation in sin and your sinful habits, for which you are as filthy in your sin as

The second reason why a man ought to have contempt for sin is this that, as Saint Peter says, "He

gradation
ter He says
nor man sho
disdain to c
says 'I am
to my body,
Nor a viler t
her body tha
were it the lo
lives, and the … , yet is he or she then more vile and more in servitude Ever from the higher degree than man falls, the more is he enthralled, and by so much the more to God and to the world is he vile and abominable O good God! Well ought a man to have disdain of sin, since, because of sin, whereas he was once free, now is he in bondage And thereupon Saint Augustine says "If thou have disdain for thy servant, if he offend or sin, have thou then disdain that thou shouldest do any sin" Have

has set them in high place, or given them understanding, bodily strength, health, beauty, prosperity, and redeemed them with H…
now se

ting n
deep
into th

The third cause that ought to m…
trition …
… my ear, bidding the

feend, hate of aungels, sclaundre of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fyr of helle And yet more foul and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that retourneth to eten his spewing And yet be ye fouler for your longe continuing in sinne and your sinful usage, for which ye be roten in your sinne, as a beest in his dong Swiche manere of thoghtes maken a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delyt, as god seith by the prophete Ezechiel "ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes, and they shuln displese yow" Sothly, sinnes been the weyes that leden folk to helle.

9 The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdeyn of sinne is this that, as seith seint Peter, "who-so that doth sinne is thral of sinne", and sinne put a man in greet thraldom. And therfore seith the prophete Ezechiel "I wente sorweful in desdayn of my-self" And certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn of sinne, and withdrawe him from that thraldom and vileinye And lo, what seith Seneca in this matere He seith thus "though I wiste that neither god ne man ne sholde nevere knowe it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to do sinne" And the same Seneca also seith "I am born to gretter thinges than to be thral to my body, or than for to maken of my body a thral" Ne a fouler thral may no man ne womman maken of his body, than for to yeven his body to sinne Al were it the fouleste cherl, or the fouleste womman that liveth, and leest of value, yet is he thanne more foule and more in servitute Evere fro the hyer degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to god and to the world vile and abhominable. O gode god, wel oghte man have desdayn of sinne, sith that, thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. And therfore seyth Seint Augustin. "if thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thyself sholdest do sinne" Take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thy-self Allas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne, and sore been ashamed of hem-self, that god of his endelees goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they so unkindely, agayns his gentilesse, quyten him so vileinsly, to slaughtre of hir owene soules O gode god, ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that seith "he lykneth a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, lyk to a ring of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe." For right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wroteth she hir beautee in the stinkinge ordure of sinne.

10 The thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to Contricion, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peynes of helle For as seint Jerome seith. "at every tyme that me remembreth of the day of dome, I quake, for whan I ete or drinke, or what-so that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe

the sete of oure lord Jesu Crist", wher as he shal make a general congregacion, wher as no man may been absent For certes, there availleth noon essoyne ne excusacion. And nat only that oure defautes shullen be juged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe And as seith Seint Bernard ther ne shal no pledinge availle, ne no sleighte, we shullen yeven rekeninge of everich ydel word" Ther shul we han a juge that may nat been de-

at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape Wherfore, as seith Seint Anselm "ful greet angwissh shul the sinful folk have at that tyme, ther shal the sterne and wrothe juge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open to destroyen him that moot biknowen hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly been shewed biforn god and biforn every creature And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules

moste come forth and shewen him" For certes, as seith seint Jerome 'the erthe shal casten him out of him

returning to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse of deeth, to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadwe of deeth, where as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste" Lo, here may ye seen that Job preyde respyt a whyle, to biwepe and waille his trespas, for soothly oon day of respyt is bettre than al the tresor of the world And for as-muche as a man may acquiten him-self biforn god by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therfore sholde he

helle 'the lond of derknesse', understondeth that he clepeth it 'londe" or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille, "derk," for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material For certes, the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle,

dead arise and come to judgment" O good God! Greatly ought a man to fear such a judgment 'Where we shall be all' as Saint Paul says, 'before the throne of Our Lord Jesus Christ' And there we shall compose a general congregation, whence no man shall absent himself For truly there shall avail neither essoin nor excuse And not only shall our

ness of death" is the sin which the wretched man has done, which hinders his *seeing* the face of God, just as does a cloud that comes between us and the sun "Land of all ease" because there are three kinds of pains against three things that folk of the world have in this present life, that is to say, honours, delights and riches Over against honours they have in Hell shame and confusion For well you know that men call 'honour' the reverence that man gives to man, but in Hell is no honour or *reverence For* indeed no more *reverence* shall be done there to a king than to a knave As to which *God says, by the Prophet Jeremiah* "They that scorn me shall be scorned" "Honour" is also called great lordship but there no man shall serve another save to his harm and torment "Honour," again, subsists in great dignity and rank but in Hell all they shall be trodden upon by devils And God says 'The horrible devils shall go and come upon the heads of the damned' And thus is because the higher they were in this life the lower shall they lie and *be defiled in Hell Against the riches* of this world shall they have the misery of poverty, and this poverty *shall be of four kinds lack of treasure, whereof* David says 'They that trust in their wealth boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, they shall sleep in the darkness of death, and nothing shall they find in their hands of all their treasure" And, moreover the misery of Hell shall consist of lack of food and drink For God says thus, through Moses "They shall be wasted with hunger, and the birds of Hell shall devour them with bitter death, and the gall *of the dragon shall be their drink, and the* venom of the dragon their morsels" And, further *more, their misery shall be for lack of clothing, for* they shall be naked of body save for the fire wherein they burn, and for other filth, and naked shall they be of soul, devoid of all virtues, which are the clothing of the soul Where shall be then the gay robes and the soft sheets and the soft shirts? Behold what God says by the prophet Isaiah "Under them shall be strewed moths and their covering shall be of the worms of Hell" And still further, their misery shall lie in lack of friends, for *he is not poor* who has good friends, but there there is no friend, for neither *God nor any other shall be friend to them, and* each of them shall hate all others with a deadly hatred "The sons and the daughters shall rebel against father and mother, and kindred against kindred, and each of them shall curse and despise the others," both day and night, as says God through the Prophet Micah And the loving people that once loved each other so passionately, each of them would eat the other if he might For how should they love in the torments of Hell who hated each other in the prosperity of this life? For trust it well, their carnal love was deadly hate, as says the *Prophet David* "Whoso loveth wickedness hateth his own soul" *And whoso hates his own soul, truly he may love no* other, in any wise And therefore, in Hell is no solace nor any friendship, but ever the more fleshly relationships there are in Hell, the more cursings and

for it sheweth him to the horrible develes that him *tormenten* "*Covered with the derknesse of deeth*" that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of god, for certes, *the sighte of* god is the lyf perdurable "The derknesse of deeth" been the sinnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben him to see the face of god, right as doth a derk cloude bitwixe us and the sonne "Lond of misese" by-cause that ther been three maneres of defautes, agayn three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lyf, that is to seyn, honours, delyces, and richesses Agayns honour, have they *in helle shame and confusion For* wel ye woot that men clepen "honour" the reverence that man doth to man, but in *helle* is noon honour ne reverence For certes, na-more reverence shal be doon there to a king than to a knave. For which god seith by the prophete Jeremye "thilke folk that me despysen shul been in despyt" "Honour" is eek cleped greet lordshipe, ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment "*Honour" is eek cleped greet dignitee and heighnesse*, but in helle shul they been al fortroden of *develes And god seith "the horrible develes shulle* goon and comen up-on the hevedes of the dampned folk" And thus is for-as muche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the more shulle they been abated and defouled in helle. Agayns the richesses of this world, shul they han misese of poverte, and this poverte shal been in foure thinges in defaute of *tresor*, of which that David *seith*, "the riche folk, that embraceden and oneden al hir herte *to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepinge* of deeth, and no-thing ne shul they finden in hir handes *of al hir tresor" And more-over, the mis*ese of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke For god seith thus by Moyses, "they shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hir drinke, and the venim of the dragon hir morsels" And forther-over, hir misese shal been in defaute of clothing for they shulle be naked in body as of clothing, save the fyr in which they brenne and *othere filthes*, and naked shul they been of soule, of alle manere vertues, *which that is the clothing of the soule Where been* thanne the gaye robes and the softe shetes and the smale shertes? *Lo*, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye "that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir covertures shulle been of wormes of helle" And forther-over, hir misese shal been in defaute of freendes, for he nis nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend, for neither god ne no creature shal been freend to hem, and everich of hem shal haten other with deedly hate. "The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen *agayns* fader and mooder, and kinrede agayns kinrede, and chyden and despysen everich of hem other," bothe day *and night*, as *god seith* by the prophete Michias And the lovinge children, that *whylom loveden so fleshly everich other*, wolden everich of hem eten other if they mighte. For how

sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem other in the prosperitee of th s lyf?

deyces been after the appetytes of the fyve wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinge, savoringe, and touchinge But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teres, and hir heringe ful of waymentinge and of grintinge of teeth, as seith Jesu Crist, hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stinkinge st nk

that seith ther-as is the shadwe of deeth." Certes, a shadwe hath the lyknesse of the thing of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thing of which it is shadwe Right so fareth the payne of helle, it is lyk deeth for the horrible angwissh, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholde dye anon, but certes they shal nat dye For as seith Seint Gregorie "to wrecche caytives shal be deeth with-oute deeth, and ende with-outen ende, and defaute with-oute failinge For hir deeth shal alwey liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille" And therfore seith Seint John the Evangelist "they shullen folwe deeth, and they shul nat finde him, and they shul desyren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem" And eek Job seith that 'in helle is noon ordre of rule" And al be-it so that god hath creat alle thinges in right ordre, and no-thing with outen ordre, but alle thinges been ordeyned and nombred, yet nathelees they that been dampned been no thing in ordre, ne holden noon ordre For the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit For, as the prophete David seith "god shal destroye the fruit of the erthe as fro hem , ne water

that been dampned And therfore han they lorn

be quenched and with worms that never shall die as God says by the mouth of Isaiah And for as much as they shall not think that they may die of pain and by death thus flee from pain then may they understand the words of Job who said There is the shadow of death Certainly a shadow has the likeness of that whereof it is the shadow but the shadow is not the substance Just so it is with the pain of Hell, it is like unto death because of the horrible anguish And why? Because it pains for ever and as if they should die at every moment but indeed they shall not die For as Saint Gregory says To these wretched captives shall be given death without death and end without end and want without ceasing ' And thereupon says Saint John the Evangelist 'They shall seek for death and they shall not find it and they shall desire to die and death shall flee from them And Job also says Death without any order And though it be that God has

bear them no fruit For as the Prophet David says God shall destroy the fruits of the earth from

for ever in the hearts of the damned And therefore have they lost all their hope and for seven causes. First because God their Judge shall be without mer

when he is dead he shall have no hope of escaping from pain ' Whosoever then, will well understand these pains and bethink him well that he has deserved these very pains for his sins certainly he shall have more longing to sigh and weep than ever

to sing and play For as Solomon says "Whoso shall have the wisdom to know the pains that have been established and ordained for the punishment of sin he will feel sorrow This same knowledge," says Saint Augustine maketh a man to bewail within his heart

al hir hope, for sevene causes First, for god that is hir juge shal be with-outen mercy to hem, ne they may nat plese him, ne noon of hise halwes, ne they ne may yeve no-thing for hir raunson, ne they have no vois to speke to him, ne they may nat flee fro peyne, ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they mowe shewe to delivere hem fro peyne And therfore seith Salomon "the wikked man dyeth, and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne" Who-so thanne wolde wel understande these peynes, and bithinke him weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his sinnes, certes, he sholde have more talent to syken and to wepe than for to singen and to pleye For as that seith Salomon "who-so that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establissed and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe" "Thilke science," as seith seint Augustin, 'maketh a man to waymenten in his herte"

The fourth point that ought to cause a man to feel contrition is the unhappy memory of the good that he has left here on earth also the good that he has lost Truly the good deeds that he has left are either those that he wrought before he fell into mortal sin or the good deeds he did while he lived in sin Indeed the good deeds he did before he fell into sin have been all deadened and stultified and rendered null and void by the repeated sinning The other good deeds which he wrought while he lay in mortal sin they are utterly dead as to the effect they might have had on his life everlasting in Heaven And then the same good deeds that have been rendered null by repeated sinning which good works he wrought while he stood in a state of grace shall never quicken again without an utter penitence And thereof God says, by the mouth of Ezekiel If the righteous man shall turn again from his righteousness and do wickedness, shall he live?' Nay for all the good works that he has wrought shall never be held in memory for he shall die in his sin And thereupon as to that same chapter Saint Gregory says thus That we shall understand this principally that when we do mortal sin it is for naught that we tell of or draw from memory the good works that we have wrought before For certainly in the doing of mortal sin there is no trusting to the help of good that we have wrought before, that is to say, as it affects the everlasting life in Heaven But notwithstanding this the good deeds quicken again and return again and help and are of avail to attaining the everlasting life in Heaven when we have contrition But indeed the good deeds that men do while they are in deadly sin because they are done in deadly sin shall never quicken again For truly, that thing which never had life may never quicken nevertheless, albeit these deeds avail nothing as to the perdurable life, yet they help to lighten the pains of Hell, or else to acquire temporal riches or else because of them God will enlighten and illumine the heart of the sinful man to be repentant and also they avail in accustoming a man to the doing of good deeds, to the end that the Fiend has less

11 The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in erthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn Soothly, the gode werkes that he hath left, outher they been the gode werkes that he wroghte er he fel in to deedly sinne, or elles the gode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in sinne Soothly, the gode werkes, that he dide biforn that he fil in sinne, been al mortified and astoned and dulled by the ofte sinning The othere gode werkes, that he wroghte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrely dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevene Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe nevere quiken agayn with-outen verray penitence And therof seith god, by the mouth of Ezechiel that, 'if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he live? Nay, for alle the gode werkes that he hath wroght ne shul nevere been in remembrance, for he shal dyen in his sinne And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus "that we shall understonde this principally, that whan we doon deedly sinne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawen in to memorie the gode werkes that we han wroght biforn" For certes, in the werkinge of the deedly sinne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn, that is to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf perdurable in hevene But natheless, the gode werkes quiken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, and availlen to have the lyf perdurable in hevene, whan we han contricion But soothly, the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly sinne, for as-muche as they were doon in deedly sinne, they may nevere quiken agayn. For certes, thing that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quikene; and natheless, al be-it that they ne availle noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availlen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, or elles that god wole the rather enlumine and lightne the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; and eek they availlen for to usen

a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteis lord Jesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost, for in somwhat it shal availle. But for-as-muche as the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in good lyf, been al mortified by sinne folwinge, and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly synne, been outrely dede as for to have the lyf perdurable, wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song· "*Jay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour*" For certes, sinne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace.

Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as

pended, in so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekening"

that in mannes sinne is every manere of ordre or ordinance turned up-so-doun For it is sooth, that god, and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure thinges sholde have lordshipe over that other, as thus

power over his soul And thus the compassionate Lord Jesus Christ wills that no good work be utterly lost, for in somewhat it shall avail But for as much as the good deeds that men do while they are in a

hard says, "of all the good things that have been

a reckoning for"

The fifth thing that ought to move a man to con-

order or ordinance is turned upside-down There

reason, and the body also And truly, this confusion and this rebellion Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered upon …

… man is worthy of shame, and this suffered Our Lord Jesus Christ for man when they spat in His face …

… there was no part of His body free from great pain and bitter passion And all this Jesus Christ suffered, Who never did any wrong And therefore it may be reasonably said of Jesus thus "Too much am I tortured for things the punishment of which I do not de…

… the bitterness of my sin, for which there must be suffered so much bitterness" For truly, according to the diverse discordances of our wicked …

… to sin, and at the last it is slain for ever For this confusion by sinful man was Jesus Christ first betrayed and afterwards bound, Who came to loose us from sin and pain Then was He scorned Who …

… who had done nothing wrong, and finally, then was He crucified and slain So was accomplished the word of Isaiah "He was wounded for our misdeeds and defiled for our felonies" Now, since Jesus Christ took upon Himself the …

Ther…

For right as reson is rebel …

… fleshly delyces and …

… and of alle thinges Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels …

… the word of Isaye "he was wounded for oure misdedes, and defouled for oure felonies" Now sith that Jesu Crist took up-on him-self the peyne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevene sholde al thus peyne endure.

13 The sixte thing that oghte …

hope to have foryifnesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvacion of sinnes And therfore seyde the aungel to Joseph. "thou shalt clepen his name Jesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes " And heer-of seith seint Peter· "ther is noon other name under hevene that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Jesus " *Nazarenus* is as muche for to seye as "florisshinge," in which a

cleped for to entre, he that openeth to me shal have foryifnesse of sinne. I wol entre in to him by my grace, and soupe with him," by the goode werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foode of god, "and he shal soupe with me," by the grete joye that I shal yeven him. Thus shal man hope, for hise werkes of penaunce, that god shall yeven him his regne, as he bihoteth him in the gospel.

14 Now shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricion. I seye, that it shal been universal and total, this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentant for alle hise sinnes that he hath

thought, and after that in his delyt, and so forth in to consentinge and in-to dede Wherefore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delytes, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. Wherfore I seye, that swiche wikked delytes and wikked thoghtes been subtile bigyleres of hem that shullen be dampned. Moreover, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes as wel as for hise wikkede dedes, for certes, the repentance of a singuler sinne, and nat repente of alle hise othere sinnes, or elles repenten him of alle hise othere sinnes, and nat of a singuler sinne, may nat availle. For certes, god almighty is al good, and ther fore he foryeveth al, or elles right noght. And heer-of

giveness of sins, which is, properly, salvation from sins And therefore said the angel to Joseph "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, Who shall save His people from their sins." And thereof says Saint Peter. "There is no other name under Heaven given to any man, whereby a man may be saved, save only Jesus." *Nazarenus* is as much as to say "flourishing," wherein a man may hope that He Who gives him remission of sins shall give him also the grace to do well For in the flower is hope of fruit in time to come, and in forgiveness of sins is hope of grace to do well "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," says Jesus ' if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him,

ter His Kingdom, as is promised unto him in the gospel

sin in acquiescence For truly, there is no mortal sin that was not first in man's thought, and after that in his delight, and so on unto acquiescence and unto deed Wherefore I say that many men never repent for such thoughts and delights, and never confess

as reason is rebel to God, therefore is man worthy to have sorrow and to die This Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for mankind after He had been betrayed by His disciple, and secured and bound "so that the blood burst out at every nail of His hands," as says Saint Augustine Moreover, for as much as reason of man will not subdue sensuality when it may, therefore man is worthy of shame, and this suffered Our Lord Jesus Christ for man when they spat in His face Furthermore, for as much, then, as the wretched body of man is rebel both to reason and to sensuality, therefore is it worthy of death And this Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for man upon the cross, where there was no part of His body free from great pain and bitter passion And all this Jesus Christ suffered, Who never did any wrong And therefore it may be reasonably said of Jesus thus "Too much am I tortured for things the punishment of which I do not deserve, and too much disgraced for shame that belongs to man" And therefore may the sinful man well say, as says Saint Bernard "Accursed be the bitterness of my sin, for which there must be suffered so much bitterness" For truly, according to the diverse discordances of our wickedness, was the passion of Jesus Christ ordained in divers ways, as thus Certainly sinful man's soul is betrayed unto the Devil by covetousness of temporal prosperity, and scorned by deceit when he chooses carnal delights, and it is tormented by impatience under adversity, and spat upon by servitude and subjection to sin, and at the last it is slain for ever. For this confusion by sinful man was Jesus Christ

plished the word of Isaiah "He was wounded for our misdeeds and defiled for our felonies." Now, since Jesus Christ took upon Himself the punishment for all our wickedness, much ought sinful man to weep and to bewail that for his sins the Son of God in Heaven should endure all this pain

For right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. And certes, this disordinance and this rebellion oure lord Jesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herkneth in which wyse. For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe and to be deed This suffred oure lord Jesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, "so that his blood brast out at every nail of hise handes," as seith seint Augustin And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have shame, and this suffred oure lord Jesu Crist for man, whan they spetten in his visage And forther-over, for-as-muchel thanne as the caitif body of man is rebel bothe to reson and to sensualitee, therfore is it worthy the deeth. And this suffred oure lord Jesu Crist for man up-on the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, with-outen greet peyne and bitter passion And al this suffred Jesu Crist, that nevere forfeted And therfore resonably may be seyd of Jesu in this manere: "to muchel am I peyned for the thinges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shendshipe that man is worthy to have" And therfore may the sinful man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard "acursed by the bitternesse of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitternesse" For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Jesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thinges, as thus Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitraysed of the devel by coveitise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delyces, and yet is it tormented by inpacience of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subjeccion of sinne, and atte laste it is slayn fynally For this disordinaunce of sinful man was Jesu Crist first bitraysed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and peyne. Thanne was he biscorned, that only sholde han been honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt, and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn Thanne was acompliced the word of Isaye "he was wounded for oure misdedes, and defouled for oure felonies" Now sith that Jesu Crist took up-on him-self the peyne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevene sholde al this peyne endure

13 The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to

largesse and of his soverayn bountee, therfore is he cleped *Jesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum* Jesus is to seyn "saveour" or "salvacion," on whom men shul

in this wise: that "right as by a man sinne entred first in to this world, and thurgh that sinne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred in-to alle men that sinneden." And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred in-to this world whan he brak the comaundement of god And therfore, he that

nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was most

lest per-aventure we should dyen." The serpent seyde to the womman "nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth, for sothe, god woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowinge good and harm" The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feding, and fair to the eyen, and delytable to the sighte, she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet, and anoon the eyen of hem bothe openeden And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breches to hiden hir membres There may ye seen that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre, and afterward, the delyt of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve, and after that, the consentinge of resoun, as sheweth here by Adam. For trust wel, thogh so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, and the flesh hadde delyt in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etinge of the fruit, yet stood he in th'estaat of innocence Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original, for of him fleshly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere And whan the soule is put in our body, right anon is contract original sinne, and that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and sinne. And therfore be we alle born sones of wratthe and of dampnacion perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which

Now as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is, concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawefulliche y-maked and by rightful jugement of god, I seye, for-as-muche as

by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; . . . so death passed upon all men, for that all

came such a one as must needs die, whether he would or no and all his progeny in this world, since they, in that man sinned Behold, in the state of

gods, knowing good and evil" And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it

serpent, and afterward the delight of the flesh, as shown here by Eve, and after that the acquiescence

pride of his heart

God Who is his Lord therefore is the flesh disobedient to *Him* through concupiscence, which is also called the nourishing of and the reason for sin *Therefore* all the while that a man has within himself the penalty of concupiscence it is impossible but that he will be sometimes tempted and moved in his flesh to do sin And this shall not fail so long as he lives it may well grow feeble and remote by virtue of baptism and by the grace of God through penitence but it shall never be fully quenched so that he shall never be moved within himself unless he be cooled by sickness or by maleficence of sorcery or by opiates For behold what Saint Paul says *The flesh lusteth against the spirit* and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would *The same Saint Paul, after his great penance* on water and on land (on water by night and by day *in great peril and in great pain on land in* famine in thirst in cold and naked and once stoned almost unto death) yet said he O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? And Saint Jerome when he had long lived in the desert where he had no company but that of wild beasts, where he had no food but herbs with only water to drink and no bed but the naked earth for which his flesh was black as an Ethiopian's with heat and well nigh destroyed with cold yet said he that the heat of lechery boiled through all his body Wherefore I know well and surely that they are deceived who say that they are never tempted in the flesh Witness Saint James the apostle who says that everyone is tempted in his own *concupiscence That is to say each of us has cause* and occasion to be tempted by sin that is nourished in the body And thereupon says Saint John the Evangelist If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us

Now shall you understand in what manner sin waxes or increases in man The first thing to be considered is this same nurturing of sin, whereof I spoke before this same fleshly concupiscence And after *that* comes the subjection to the Devil that is to say the Devil's bellows wherewith he blows into *man the fire of concupiscence And after that a man* bethinks himself whether he will do or not the thing to which he is *tempted* And then *if a man* withstand and put aside the first enticement of his flesh and the fiend then it is no sin and if it be that he do not he feels anon a flame of delight And then it is well to be wary and to guard himself else he will fall anon into acquiescence to sin and then he will do it if he have time and place And of this matter Moses says that the Devil says thus I will pursue I will overtake I will divide the spoil my lust shall be satisfied *upon* them *I will draw my* sword my hand shall destroy them For certainly *just as a sword may part a thing in two pieces, just* so acquiescence separates God from man And then will I slay him in his sinful deed Thus says the

man is nat obeisaunt to god, that is his lord, therfore is the flesh to him disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissinge of sinne and occasion of sinne Therfore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and moeved in his flesh to sinne And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth, it may wel wexe feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god thurgh penitence, but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal som tyme be moeved in him-self, but if he were al refreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie or colde drinkes For lo, what seith seint Paul "*the flesh coveiteth* agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the *flesh*, they been so contrarie and so stryven that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde " *The same seint* Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond (*in water by night and by day, in greet peril* and in greet peyne, in lond, in famine, in thurst, in cold and clothlees, and ones stoned almost to the deeth) yet seyde he allas! I, caytif man, who shal delivere me fro the prisoun of my caytif body? And seint Jerome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where-as he hadde no companye but of wilde bestes, where-as he ne hadde no mete but herbes and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopen for hete and ny destroyed for cold, yet seyde he that 'the brenninge of lecherie boiled in al his body " Wherfore I woot wel sikerly, that they been deceyved *that* seyn, that they *ne be nat* tempted in hir body Witnesse on Seint Jame the *Apostel, that seith that every wight is tempted* in his owen concupiscence", that is to seyn, that everich of us hath *matere* and occasion to be tempted of the norissinge of sinne that is in his body And therfore seith Seint John the Evaungelist if that we seyn that we beth with-oute sinne, we deceyve us-selve, and trouthe is nat in us "

20 Now shal ye understonde in what manere that sinne wexeth or encreseth in man The firste thing is thilke norissinge of sinne of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence And after that comth the subjeccion of the devel, this is to seyn, the deveies bely, with which he bloweth in man *the fyr of fleshly* concupiscence *And after that* a man bithinketh him whether he wol doon, or no, *thilke thing to which he is tempted* And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entysinge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no sinne and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feleth he anon a flambe of delyt And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen him wel, or elles he wol falle anon in to consentinge of sinne, and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere '*the feend seith, I wole chace and pursue* the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wol hente *him by moevynge or stiringe of sinne* I wol departe my pryse or my praye by deliberacioun, and my lust shal been accompliced in delyt, I wol

thanne is the sin cleped actuel

21 For sothe, sinne is in two maneres, outher it is venial, or deedly sinne Soothly, whan man loveth any creature more than Jesu Crist oure creatour thanne is it deedly sinne And venial synne is it if man love Jesu Crist lasse than him oghte For sothe the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to god more and more And therfore, if a man charge him-self with manye swiche venial sinnes certes h

his soule with venial sinnes, the more is he enclyned to fallen in to deedly sinne And therfore, lat us nat be necl gent

adam doth som tyme the smale dropes of water, that entren thurgh a litel crevace in to the thurrok and in to the botme of the ship, if men be so necligent that they ne descharge hem nat by tyme And therfore, althogh ther be a difference bitwixe thise two causes of drenchinge, algates the ship is dreynt Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly sinne, and of anoyouse veniale sinnes, whan they multiplye in a man so grea

al though that a man love it lasse than god yet is it venial sinne and deedly sinne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of god or more Deedly sinne, as seith seint Augustin, is whan a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verray sovereyn bountee that may nat chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thing that may chaunge and flitte , and certes, that is every

creature so muche he bireveth fro god and therfore doth he sinne For he, that is dettour to god, ne yeldeth nat to god al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte

22 Now sith man understondeth generally, which is venial sinne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of sinnes whiche that many a man per-aventure ne demeth hem nat sinnes, and ne

Fiend For truly then is a man dead in soul And thus is sin accompl shed by temptat on and by acquiescence and then is the sin called actual

Forsooth sin is of two kinds it is e ther venial or mortal sin Ver ly when man loves any creature more than he loves Jesus Chr st our Creator then is it mortal sin And venial sin it is if a man love

God And therefore if a man charge himself with many such ven al sins then certa nly unless he discharge them occas onally by shriving they may eas ly lessen in him all the love that he has for Jesus Christ and in this wise ven al sin passes over into mortal sin Therefore let us not be negl gent n rid d ng ourselves of venial s ns For the proverb has it

Mony a muckle mak s a muckle And hear this example A huge wave of the sea comes sometimes with so great violence that it sinks a ship And the same harm is caused sometimes by the small drops of water that enter through the little opening in the seam into the bilge of the ship if men be so negligent that they do not discharge it in time And therefore though there be a difference between these two ways of s nking nevertheless the ship is sunk Just so it is sometimes with mortal sin and with vexatious venial sins when they multiply in a man so greatly that the worldly things he loves for which he venially sins have grown as great in his

sin and it is mortal sin when the love for anyth ng weighs in the heart of man as much as the love for God or more Mortal sin as Saint Augustine says is when a man turns h s heart from God

h s heart unto a creature then certainly so much of

Now since man understands generally what venial sin is, it is fitt ng to tell e pecially of sins which many a man perhaps holds not to be s ns at all and for which he shrives not himself yet nevertheless they

are sins Truly, as clerics write, every time a man eats or drinks more than suffices for the sustenance of his body *it is certain that he thereby sins* And too when he speaks more than it is necessary it is sin *Also when he hears not benignly the complaint of* the poor Also, when he is in health of body and will *not* fast when other folk fast *and* that without a reasonable excuse Also when he sleeps more than he needs or when he comes for that *reason* too late to church or to other places where works of charity are done Also when he enjoys his wife without a sovereign desire to procreate children to the honour of God or when he does it without intention to yield to his wife the duty of his body Also, when he will not visit the sick and the imprisoned if he may do so Also if he love wife or child or any other worldly thing more than reason requires Also if he flatter or blandish more than of necessity he ought Also if he diminish or withdraw his alms to the poor Also, if *he prepare his food more delicately than is needful,* or eat it too hastily or too greedily Also if he talk *about vain and trifling matters in a church or at* God's service or if he be a user of idle words of folly *or of obscenity for he shall yield up an accounting* of it at the day of doom Also when he promises or assures one that he will do what he *cannot perform* Also when he through thoughtlessness or folly slanders or scorns his neighbour Also when he suspects a thing to be evil when he has no certain knowledge of it These things and more without number are sins as Saint Augustine says

shryveth hym nat of the same thinges, and yet nathelees they been sinnes Soothly, as thise clerkes wryten, *this is to seyn,* that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the *sustenaunce of his body, in certein he dooth sinne* And eek whan he speketh more than nedeth, it is *sinne* Eke *whan he herkneth nat benignely the* compleint of the povre Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, with outen cause resonable Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite Eke whan he useth his wyf, with-outen sovereyn desyr of engendrure, to the honour of god, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body Eke whan he wol nat visite the sike and the prisoner, if he may Eke if he love wyf or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requyreth Eke if he flatere or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre Eke if he ap*parailleth his mete more deliciously than nede is,* or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse Eke if he tale *vanitees at chirche or at goddes service*, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes of folye or of vileinye, *for he shal yelden acountes of it at the day of dome* Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thinges that he may nat perfourne Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his neighebore Eke whan he hath any wikked suspecion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse Thise thinges and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, as seith seint Augustin

Now shall men understand that while no earthly man may avoid all venial sins yet may he keep them down by the burning love that he has to Our Lord *Jesus Christ and by prayer and confession and* by other good deeds For as Saint Augustine says "If a *man love God in such manner that all that he ever* does is done in the love of God and truly for the love of God because he burns with the love of God behold then how much a drop of water falling in a furnace harms or proves troublesome and just so much vexes the venial sin a man who is perfect in the love of Christ Men may also keep down venial sins by receiving deservingly the precious body of Jesus Christ also by receiving holy water by alms giving by general confession of *confiteor* at mass and at compline, and by the blessings of bishops and of *priests and by other good works.*

Now shal men understonde, that al be-it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge *love* that he hath to oure lord Jesu Crist, *and by* preyeres and confession and othere gode werkes, *so that it shal but litel greve For, as seith* seint Augustin "if a man love god in swiche manere, that al that evere he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verraily, for he brenneth in the love of god loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Jesu Crist" Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthily of the precious body of Jesu Crist; *by* receyving eek of holy water, by almesdede, by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse and at complin, and by blessinge of bisshopes and of *preestes, and by othere gode werkes*

HERE ENDETH THE SECOND PART OF PENITENCE

HERE FOLLOWETH THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND THEIR DEPENDENCIES, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND TYPES

Now it is a needful thing to tell which are the mortal sins, that is to say the principal sins they are all leashed together, but are different in their ways Now they are called principal sins because they are the chief sins and the trunk from which branch all

23 Now is it bihovely thing to telle whiche been the deedly sinnes, this is to seyn, chieftaines of sinnes, alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres Now been they cleped *chieftaines for as*muche as they been chief, and springers of alle

othere sinnes Of the roote of thise sevene sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes, for of this rote springen certein braunches, as Ire,

others And the root of these seven sins is pride which is the general root of all evils for from this root spring certain branches, as anger, envy acedia or sloth, avarice (or covetousness for vulgar understanding), gluttony and lechery And each of these principal sins has its branches and its twigs as shall be set forth and declared in the paragraphs following

Of Pride

24 And thogh so be that no man can outrely telle the nombre of the twigges and of the harmes

Sdn, Contumacie, Presumpcion, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie, and many another twig that I can nat declare Inobedient, is he that disobeyeth for despyt to the comandements of god and to hise sovereyns, and to his goostly fader Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon Ipocrite, is he

or his evenecristene, or hath despyt to doon that him oghte to do Arrogant, is he that thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath noght, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes, or elles he demeth that he be that he nis nat Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of hise sinnes Swellinge of herte, is whan a man rejoyseth him of harm that he hath doon Insolent, is he that

been stryf his fe

hem that been hise sovereyns Presumpcion, is whan a man undertaketh an empryse that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do, and that is called Surquidrie Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour thereas hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be reverenced Pertinacie is whan man deffendeth his folye, and trusteth to muchel in his owene wit Veyne glorie, is for to have pompe and delyt in his temporel hynesse, and glorifie him in this worldly estaat. Janglinge, is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille, and taken no kepe what they seye

obedience boasting hypocrisy scorn arrogance impudence swelling of the heart insolence elation, impatience strife contumacy presumption irrever

as he is not Scorner is he who has disdain for his neighbour that is to say for his fellow Christian or

rulers Presumption is when a man undertakes an enterprise that he ought not to attempt or one which he cannot accomplish and that is called over confidence Irreverence is when men do not show honour

ing no care of what they say

25 And yet is ther a privee spece of Pryde, that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth

And then there is a private species of pride that waits to be saluted before it will salute albeit the one who has it is of less worth than is the other per

neighbour, *and* similar things, all against his necessity, peradventure, save that in his heart and his will is such proud desire to be *magnified and* honoured before the people

Now there are two kinds of or de...
within the h...
Whereof, tr...
I have namec...
the heart of...
without P...

have noted...
man in the g...
same p...

As to the f...
ing, wh...
people t...
rate notc...
the twist...
cloth...
ge...
be...

... fashion of making one leg of their hose white and the other red, make it seem that half their shameful privy members are flayed And if it be that they divide their hose in other colours, as

duetee ...

26 Now been ther two maneres of P...
oon of ham...
othe...
thing...
pryd...
spece...
oon o...
right...
wyn...
thinge... and contenaunce, and in outrageous array of clothing, for certes, if ther ne hadde be no sinne in clothing, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel And, as seith *Seint Gregorie*, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse, and for his strangenesse and degysinesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it Allas! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the sinful costlewe array of clothinge, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse?

27 *As to the firste sinne, that is in superfluitee of clothinge, which that maketh it so dere* to harm of the peple ...
ding...
ding...
able...
lewe...
inge...
of the...
p...
be... such pounsoned and dagged clothing to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hir estaat, ne suffisant ...
necessitee ...
sh... ... inge, in departinge of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayn. And if so

be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whyt and blak, or whyt and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth, thanne semeth it, as by variance of colour, that half the partie of hir privee

ther as they purgen hir stinkinge ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despyt of honestetee, the which honestetee that Jesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, god woot, that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hir array of atyr likerousnesse and pryde I sey nat that honestetee in clothinge of

delyt, that been so faire, fatte, and costlewe, and also to many a vicious knave that is sustened by cause of hem, in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and brydles covered with precious clothing and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver For which god seith by Zakarie the prophete, "I wol confounde the ryderes of swiche horses" This folk taken litel reward of the rydinge of goddes sone of hevene, and of his harneys whan he rood up on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povre clothes of hise disciples, ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other beest I speke this for the sinne of superfluitee, and nat for reasonable honestetee, whan reson it requyreth And forther, certes pryde is greetly notified in holdinge of greet meinee, whan they

they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meinee Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the thefte of hir hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites

lordshipes, and god yeve that they mote descenden in to helle al doun, for in hir houses been iniquitees and shrewednesses," and nat god of hevene And certes, but if they doon amendement, right as god yaf his benison to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so god wol yeve his malison to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servaunts, but if they come to amendement Pryde of the table appereth eek ful ofte, for certes, riche

white and black or white and blue or black and

lives Now as to the extravagant array of women God knows that though the faces of them seem chaste and gentle yet do they advertise by their attire their lickerousness and pride I say not that a moderate gaiety in clothing is unseemly but certainly the superfluity or inordinate scantiness of clothing is reprehensible Also the sin of adornment or apparel lies in things that appertain to riding as in too many fine horses that are kept for delight that are so fair fat and costly in many a vicious

gard for the riding of God of Heaven s Son and of His trappings, when He rode upon the ass and had no other caparison than the poor cloaks of His disciples nor do we read that ever He rode upon any

is especially so when such an array of servants is mis

run hostelries sustain the thievery of their servants which is done in many ways This kind of folk are

it is scandalous to think upon. And also in too great

preciousness of vessels and in curious instruments of minstrelsy whereby a man is stirred the more to the delights of luxury if it be that he thereby sets his heart the less upon Jesus Christ certainly it is a sin and certainly the delights might be so great in this case that a man could easily fall thereby into mortal sin The varieties of sin that arise out of pride truly when they arise with malice imagined advised and aforethought or from habit, are mortal sins and of that there is no doubt And when they arise out of frailty, unadvisedly and suddenly and are quickly withdrawn again albeit they are grievous sins I think that they are not mortal Now might men ask whence pride arises and takes its being and I say sometimes it springs out of the good things of nature and sometimes from the benefits of Fortune and sometimes from the good of grace itself Certainly the good things of nature consist of either physical well being or riches of the soul Certainly physical well being consists of the weal of the body as strength activity beauty good blood and generous candour The benefits of nature to the soul are good wit keen understanding clever talent natural virtue and good memory The benefits of Fortune are riches high rank and the people's praise The good of grace consists of knowledge power to suffer spiritual travail benignity virtuous contemplation ability to withstand temptation and similar things Of which aforesaid things certainly it is great folly in a man when he permits himself to be proud of any of them As for the benefits of nature God knows that sometimes we receive them naturally as much to our detriment as to our profit As to take bodily health certainly it passes away lightly enough and moreover it is often the reason for the wickedness of the soul for God knows that the flesh is a great enemy to the soul and therefore the more sound the body is the more are we in danger of falling into sin Also to feel pride in the strength of one's body is a great folly for certainly the flesh lusts for that which is detrimental to the spirit and ever the stronger the flesh is the sorrier must the soul be and above all this, strength of body and worldly boldness bring a man often into danger of mischance Also to be proud of his gentility is a great folly for often the gentility of the body debases the gentility of the soul and furthermore we are all of one father and one mother and we are of one nature rotten and corrupt both the rich and the poor Forsooth but one kind of gentility is praiseworthy and that is which clothes a man's heart with virtue and morality and makes of him Christ's child For trust this well that over whatsoever man sin has gained the mastery that man is a very serf to sin

Now there are general signs of gentility as the eschewing of vice and ribaldry and servitude to sin

men been cleped to festes, and povre folk been put awey and rebuked Also in excesse of diverse metes and drinkes, and namely, swiche manere bake metes and dish metes, brenninge of wilde fyr, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wa t, so that it is abusion for to thinke And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of minstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delyces of luxurie, if so be that he sette his herte the lasse up-on oure lord Jesu Crist, certein it is a sinne, and certeinly the delyces mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly falle by hem in to deedly sinne The especes that sourden of Pryde, soothly whan they sourden of malice ymagined, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute And whan they sourden by freletee unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawen ayein, al been they grevouse sinnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly Now mighte men axe wher-of that Pryde sourdeth and springeth, and I seye somtyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, and som tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som-tyme of the goodes of grace Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outher in goodes of body or in goodes of soule Certes, goodes of body been hele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrye, franchise Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharp understondynge, subtil engin, vertu naturel, good memorie Goodes of fortune been richesses, highe degrees of lordshipes, preisinges of the peple Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaille, benignitee, vertuous contemplacion, withstondinge of temptacion, and semblable thinges Of whiche forseyde goodes, certes it is a ful greet folye a man to pryden him in any of hem alle Now as for to speken of goodes of nature, god woot that som tyme we han hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit As, for to speken of hele of body, certes it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte encheson of the siknesse of oure soule, for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule and therfore, the more that the body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle Eke for to pryde him in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye, for certes, the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be and, over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardinesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce Eek for to pryde him of his gentrye is ful greet folye; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soule and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o moder and alle we been of o nature roten and corrupt both riche and povre For sothe, oo manere gentrye is for to preise, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child For truste wel, that over what man sinne hath maistrie, he is a verray cherl to sinne

28 Now been ther generale signes of gentilesse as eschewinge of vyce and ribaudye and servage of

sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance, and us-

men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir king, they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may stinge." Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attayne to heighe vertuouse thinges Now certes, a man to pryde him in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folye, for thilke yiftes of grace that sholde have turned him to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth him to venim and to confusion, as seith seint Gregorie Certes also, who-so prydeth him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool, for som-tyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a ca

they choose one that has no prick wherewith he may

for sometimes a man is a great lord at morning who is a captive and a wretch ere it be night, and some times the wealth of a man is the cause of his death, sometimes the pleasures of a man cause the grievous malady whereof he dies Certainly the people's commendation is sometimes false enough and brittle enough to trust, today they praise, tomorrow they blame God knows, desire to have commendation of the people has caused death to many a busy man

The Remedy Against the Sin of Pride

29 Now sith that so is, that ye han understonde what is pryde, and whiche been the speces of it, and whennes pryde

Now, since it has come to pass that you have understood what pride is, and what the species of it are, and whence pride arises and springs now you shall understand what is the remedy for the sin of pride, and that is, humility or meekness That is a virtue

humility is of the mouth and the third is in a man's works The humility of heart is of four kinds one is when a man holds himself to be of nothing worth before God in Heaven Another is, when he despises no other man The third is, when he recks not though men hold him as nothing worth The fourth is when he is not sorry for his humiliation Also, the humility of the mouth is of four kinds temperate speech, meek speech, and when a man acknowledges

that oon is, whan a man holdeth him-self as noght worth

other man, and nothing ther-of amenuseth. Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres the firste is, whan he putteth othere men biforn him The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over-al The thridde is gladl

Here Followeth Envy

After pride I will speak of the foul sin of envy, which is, *according to the word of the philosopher,*

of malice is when a *man wars against* the truth

kinds of envy are these there is first, sorrow for

Devil, who always rejoices in man's harm *From these* two species comes backbiting, and this *sin of* backbiting, or detraction has *certain* forms as thus A man praises his neighbour with a wicked *intention*, for he puts always a wicked *twist* into it at the end Always he puts a but in at the end *which implies* more blame than all the praise is worth The second

sometimes with man *Impatience* with *God* it is when the man grumbles *against* the pains of Hell, or against poverty, or loss of chattles, or *against* rain or

30 After Pryde wol I speken of the foule sinne of Envye, which *is*, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of *other mannes* prosperitee, and after the word of *seint* Augustin, it is sorwe of other *mannes* wele, and joye of *othere* mennes harm This foule *sinne is platly* agayns the holy goost Al-be-it so that every sinne is agayns the holy goost, yet nathelees, for as muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the holy goost, and Envye comth proprely of malice, therfore it is proprely agayn the

nat that he is in *sinne, which is the* hardnesse of the devel That other spece of *malice is, whan* a man werreyeth trouthe, *whan he* woot that it is

For wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delyt *in* itself, save only Envye, that evere hath in itself anguish and sorwe The speces of Envye been thise ther is first, sorwe of other mannes good-

the devel, that evere rejoyseth *him* of mannes harm. Of thise two *speces comth bakbyting*, and this sinne

murmuracion, and somtyme it springeth of impa-

suffre paciently, for they comen by the rightful jugement and ordinance of god Somtyme comth grucching of avarice, as Judas grucched agayns the

grucched agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approched to Jesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes And somtyme grucching sourdeth of Envye, whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals Murmure eek is ofte amonges servaunts, that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon leveful thinges, and, for as muche as they dar nat openly withseye the comaundements of hir sovereyns yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively for verray despyt, whiche wordes men clepen the develes *Paternoster*, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater-noster*, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name Som tyme grucching comth of ire or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare Thanne cometh eek

comth scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. Thanne comth accusinge, as whan man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe night and day to accusen us alle Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively if he may, and if he noght may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous prively, or empoysone or sleen hise bestes, and semblable thinges

Lord Jesus Christ with her precious ointment This murmuring is such as when a man grumbles at good that he himself has done, or that other folk do with their wealth Sometimes murmuring comes of pride, as when Simon the Pharisee murmured against the Magdalen when she approached Jesus Christ and

wicked will shall not want for means to harm him, as by burning his house or poisoning or slaying his beasts, and suchlike things

The Remedy Against the Sin of Envy

31 Now wol I spek

And truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebore thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother

thy neighebore as thyselve," that is to seyn, to salvacion bothe of lyf and of soule And more-over, thou shalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestinge and

Now will I speak of the remedy for this foul sin of

example You *shall not covet his wife* nor any of his things Understand also that in the word neighbour is included his enemy Certainly man shall love his enemy by the commandment of God, and truly, your friend shall you love in God I say, you shall love your enemy for God's sake and by His commandment For if it were reasonable that a man should hate his enemies then God would not receive us into His love when we are His enemies For three kinds of wrong that his enemy may do to a man he shall do three things in return thus for hate and rancour he shall love him in heart For chiding and wicked words he shall pray for his enemy And for the wicked deed of his enemy, he shall do him kindness For Christ says Love your enemies bless them that curse you do good to them that hate you and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you 'Lo thus Our Lord Jesus Christ commands that we do to our enemies For indeed nature drives us to love our enemies, and faith our enemies have more need for love than our friends and they that have more need truly to them men ought to do good and truly in the deed thereof have we remembrance of the love of Jesus Christ Who died for His enemies. And in so much as that same love is the harder to feel and to show in that much is the merit the greater, and therefore the loving of our enemy has confounded the venom of the Devil For just as the Devil is discomfited by humility so is he wounded to the death by love for our enemy Certainly then love is the medicine that purges the heart of man of the poison of envy The kinds of this degree of sin will be set forth more at large in the paragraphs following

word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by entysing of wikked ensample Thou shalt nat desyren his wyf, ne none of hise thinges. Understond eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comandement of god, and soothly thy frend shaltow love in God, I seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for goddes sake, by his comandement For if it were reson that a man sholde haten his enemy, for sothe god nolde nat receiven us to his love that been hise enemys Agayns three manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym, he shal doon three thinges, as thus Agayns hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte Agayns chyding and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy And agayn the wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon him bountee For Crist seith, loveth youre enemys, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm, and eek for hem that yow chacen and pursewen, and doth bountee to hem that yow haten" Lo, thus comaundeth us oure lord Jesu Crist, to do to oure enemys For soothly, nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and parfey, oure enemys han more nede to love than our freendes, and they that more nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse, and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jesu Crist, that deyde for hise enemys And in-as muche as thilke love is the more grevous to perfourne, in-so-muche is the more gretter the merite, and therfore the lovinge of oure enemy hath confounded the venum of the devel For right as the devel is disconfited by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy Certes, thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venum of Envye fro mannes herte The speces of this pas shullen be more largely in hir chapitres folwinge declared

Here followeth Wrath

After envy will I describe the sin of anger For truly whoso has envy of his neighbour will generally find himself showing anger in word or in deed against him whom he envies And anger comes as well from pride as from envy for certainly, he that is proud or envious is easily angered.

This sin of anger, according to Saint Augustine is a wicked determination to be avenged by word or by deed Anger according to the philosopher is the hot blood of man quickened in his heart because of which he wishes to harm him whom he hates For truly the heart of man by the heating and stirring of his blood grows so disturbed that he is put out of all ability to judge reasonably But you shall understand that anger manifests itself in two manners one of them is good the other bad The good anger is caused by zeal for goodness, whereof a man is enraged by wickedness and against wickedness and thereupon a wise man says that Anger is better than play This anger is gentle and without bitterness not felt against the man but against the misdeed of the man, as the Prophet David says *Iras*

32 After Envye wol I discryven the sinne of Ire For soothly, who-so hath envye upon his neghebor, anon he wole comunly finde him a matere of wrathe, in word or in dede, agayns him to whom he hath envye And as wel comth Ire of Pryde, as of Envye, for soothly, he that is proude or envious is lightly wrooth.

33 This sinne of Ire, after the discryving of seint Augustin, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or by dede Ire, after the philosophre, is the fervent blood of man y-quiked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to him that he hateth. For certes the herte of man, by eschaufinge and moevinge of his blood, wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle jugement of resoun But ye shal understonde that Ire is in two maneres, that oon of hem is good, and that other is wikked The gode Ire is by jalousye of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikkednesse, and therfore seith a wys man, that Ire is bet than pley" Thus Ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitternesse, nat wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the misdede of the man, as seith the prophete

David, *Irascimini et nolite peccare* Now understond-

the vertu that is in mannes soule, and put in him the lyknesse of the devel, and binimeth the man fro god that is his rightful lord This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel, for it is the develes fourneys, that is eschaufed with the fyr of helle For certes, right so as fyr is more mighty to destroyen erthely thinges than any other element, right so Ire is mighty to destroyen alle spirituel thinges Loke how that fyr of smale gledes, that been almost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been touched with brimstoon, right so

of thilke tree, and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fyr of it wol lasten al a yeer or more And right so

and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by vileyns reprevinges Certes, this cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the man him self and eek to his neighebor For soothly, almost al the harm that any man dooth to his neighebore comth of wratthe For certes, outrageous wratthe doth al that evere the devel him comaundeth

cimini et nolite peccare Now understand that wick-

pride is often the matter of which anger is made, just so is rancour the nurse and keeper of anger There is a kind of tree as Saint Isidore says, which when men make a fire of the wood of it, and then cover over the coals with ashes truly the embers will live and last a year or more And just so fares it with

In this aforesaid Devil's furnace there are forged

From anger come these stinking engenderings first hate which is old wrath discord by which a

bours For truly it is as wicked to take away a man s

hungry bears in withholding or diminishing the wag

all these are mortal sins Bodily homicide is when you slay a man with your tongue is some manner as

is that which is done by necessity as when one man slays another in his own defence and when he may not otherwise escape his own death But certainly, if he may escape without killing his adversary and yet slays him he commits sin and he shall bear the *punishment for mortal sin* Also if a man by force

and makes a woman barren by the drinking of poisonous drugs whereby she cannot conceive or slays an unborn child deliberately by drugs or by the introduction of certain substances into her secret parts with intent to slay the child or does any unnatural *sin whereby man or woman spill his or her fluid in* such manner or in such place as a child cannot be

womb or strike a woman knowingly in such manner that she is caused to miscarry and lose her child All these constitute homicide and are horrible mortal sins. Besides, there come from anger many more

35 Of Ire comen thise stinkinge engendrures first hate, that is old wratthe, discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath loved ful longe And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebore, in body or in catel Of this cursed sinne of Ire cometh eek manslaughtre And understonde wel, that homicyde, that is manslaughtre, is in dyverse wyse Som manere of homicyde is spirituel, and som is bodily Spirituel manslaughtre is in six thinges First, by hate, as seint John seith, "he that hateth his brother is homicyde" Homicyde is eek by bakbytinge, of whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that "they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hir neighebores" For soothly, as wikke is to binime his good name as his lyf Homicyde is eek, in yevinge of wikked conseil by fraude, as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and taillages Of whiche seith Salomon, "Leon roryinge and bere hongry been lyke to the cruel lordshipes," in with

sinnes Bodily manslaughtre is, whan thow sleest

dampneth him that is coupable to the deeth But lat the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delyt to spille blood, but for kepinge of rightwisenesse Another homicyde is, that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from his owene deeth But certeinly, if he may escape withouten *manslaughtre* of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly sinne Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homicyde Eek if a womman by necligence overlyeth hir child in hir sleping, it is homicyde and deedly sinne Eek whan man destourbeth concepcion of a child, and maketh a womman outher bareyne by drinkinge

which man or womman shedeth hir nature in manere or in place ther as a child may nat be conceived, or elles, if a womman have conceyved and hurt hirself, and sleeth the child, yet is it homicyde What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicyde Homicyde is eek if a man approcheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perissed, or elles smyteth a womman witingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle thise been homicydes and horrible deedly sinnes.

[35] Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo sinnes, as wel in word as in thoght and in dede, as he that arretteth upon god, or blameth god, of thing of which he is him-self gilty; or despyseth god and alle hise halwes, as doon thise cursede hasardours in diverse contrees This cursed sinne doon they, whan they felen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of god and of hise halwes Also, whan they treten unreverently the sacrement of the auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relesed, but that the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes, it is so greet and he so benigne Thanne comth of Ire attry angre, whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his sinne, than wole he be angry and answeren hokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his sinne by unstedefastnesse of his flesh, or elles he dide it for to holde companye with hise felawes, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him, or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his complexioun is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it as his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age, or elles, he seith, it cometh him of gentillesse of hise auncestres, and semblable thinges. Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol nat delivere hem-self. For soothly, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his sinne may nat been delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely biknoweth his sinne After this, thanne cometh swering, that is expres agayn the comandement of god, and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of Ire. God seith "thou shalt nat take the name of thy lord god in veyn or in ydel." Also oure lord Jesu Crist seith by the word of seint Mathew "*Nolite iurare omnino* ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere, neither by hevene, for it is goddes trone, ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet, ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyn heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. But seyeth by youre word, 'ye, ye,' and 'nay, nay', and what that is more, it is of yvel," seith Crist For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so sinfully, in dismembringe of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body For certes, it semeth that ye thinke that the cursede Jewes ne dismembred nat y-nough the preciouse persone of Crist, but ye dismembre him more And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of god in youre swering, as seith Jeremye *quarto capitulo*, "*Iurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia*· thou shalt kepe three condicions, thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse" Thus is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth, for every lesinge is agayns Crist For Crist is verray trouthe And think wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whyl he useth swich unleveful swering Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, whan thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for favour, ne for mede, but for rightwisnesse, for declaracioun of it to the worship of god and helping of thyne evenecristene And therfore, every man that taketh goddes name in ydel, or falsly

sins, as well of word as of thought and of deed, as that of accusing God of or blaming God for, a thing of which a man is himself guilty, or despising God and all His saints, as do wicked gamblers in divers countries They do this cursed sin when they feel in their heart a great wickedness toward God and His saints Also, they do it when they treat irreverently the sacraments of the altar, and then the sin is so great that scarcely may it be forgiven, save that the mercy of God passes all His works, it is so great and He is so benign Then comes of anger, venomous anger, when a man is sharply admonished after confession to forgo his sin, then will he be angry and will answer scornfully and angrily, and will defend or excuse his sin as the result of the weakness of his flesh, or else he did it to keep the good will of his fellows, or else, he'll say, the Fiend enticed him, or else he did it because of his youth, or else his temperament is so mettled that he could not forbear, or else it was his destiny, as he says, until a certain age or else, he says, it comes to him out of the breeding of his ancestors, and suchlike things All this kind of folk so wrap themselves in their sins that they will not deliver themselves For truly, no man that excuses himself for his sin may be shriven of it until he meekly acknowledges it. After this, then comes swearing, which is expressly against the commandment of God, and this comes often of anger and ire God says "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Also, Our Lord Jesus Christ says, through Saint Matthew "*Nolite iurare omnino* neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne nor by the earth, for it is His footstool neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black but let your communication be, yea yea nay, nay for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil" For Christ's sake, swear not so sinfully thus dismembering Christ by soul, heart, bones, and body For indeed it seems that you think that the cursed Jews did not dismember enough the precious body of Christ, since you dismember Him even more And if it be that the law compel you to swear, then be governed by the rule of the law in your swearing as Jeremiah says, *quarto capitulo* '*Iurabis, in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia* thou shalt swear, the Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness" That is to say, you shall swear truth, for every lie is against Christ. For Christ is utter truth And think well on this, that every great swearer, not by law compelled to swear, the plague will not depart from his house while he continues to indulge in such forbidden swearing You shall swear for the sake of justice also, when you are constrained by your judge to bear witness to the truth Also, you shall swear not for envy, nor for favour, nor for reward, but for righteousness, for the declaring of it to the honour of God and the helping of your fellow Christian And therefore, every man that takes God's name in vain, or falsely swears by word of mouth or takes upon him the name of Christ that he may be called a Christian

man, and who lives not in accordance with Christ's example of living and with His teaching, all they take God's name in vain Behold, too, what Saint Peter says, *Actuum, quarto capitulo* "*Non est aliud nomen sub celo, etc* There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved " That is to say, save the name of Jesus Christ Take heed also how in the precious name of Christ, as Saint Paul says *ad Philipenses secundo* "*In nomine Jesu, etc* In the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ' For it is so high and so worshipful that the cursed Fiend in Hell must tremble to hear it named

Then it appears that men who swear so horribly by His blessed name despise Him more boldly than all the cursed Jews, or even than the Devil, who trembles when he hears His name

Now, certainly, since swearing, unless it be law fully done, is so strictly forbidden, much worse is false swearing, and it is needless

What shall we say of those that delight in swearing and hold it for an act of the gentry, or a manly thing, to swear great oaths? And what of those that, of

What shall we say of those that believe in divina tions, as by the flying or the crying of birds, or of beasts, or by chance, by geomancy, by dreams, by

pent and mend their ways, who set their beliefs in such filth Charms against wounds or maladies in men or in beasts, if they have any effect, it may be, peradventure, that God permits it that folk shall have the more faith in Him and the more reverence unto His name

Now will I speak of lying, which generally is the using of words in false signification with intent to deceive one's fellow Christian Some lying there is whereof there comes no advantage to anyone, and some lying is done for the ease and profit of one man,

word, and some lying is done out of recklessness, without forethought; and for similar reasons.

ly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him

aliud nomen sub celo," &c "Ther nis noon other name," seith seint Peter, "under hevene, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved", that is to seyn, but the name of Jesu Crist Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith seint Paul *ad Philipenses secundo, "In nomine Jesu, &c* that in the name of Jesu every knee of hevenely creatures, or erthely, or of helle sholden bowe", for it is so heigh and so worshipful, that the cursede feend in helle sholde tremblen to heren it y-nempned Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despyse him more boldely than dide the cursede Jewes, or elles the

in swering, and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, this is horrible sinne. Sweringe sodeynly with-oute avysement is eek a sinne But lat us go now to thilke horrible swering of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon thise false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacins ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fyr, or in a shulder-boon of a sheep. I can nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damnably, agayns Crist and al the feith of holy chirche

38 What seye we of hem that bileven in divynailes, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? Certes, al this thing is deffended by god and by al holy chirche For which they been acursed, til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hir bileve Charmes for woundes or maladye of men, or of bestes, if they taken any effect, it may be peraventure that god suffreth it, for folk sholden yeve the more feith and reverence to his name

lesinge turneth to the ese or profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man Another les-

tein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraccion; but certes flaterye, that maketh a man to enhauncen his herte and his contenaunce Flateres been the develes enchauntours, for they make

it o man be wrooth with another, thanne wol he

reveth man fro the regne of god, as seith seint Paul And ofte tyme swich cursinge wrongfully retorneth agayn to him that curseth, as a brid that retorneth agayn to his owene nest And over alle thing men oghten eschewe to cursen hir children, and yeven to the devel hir engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is, certes, it is greet peril and greet sinne

42 Lat us thanne speken of chydinge and reproche, whiche been ful grete woundes in mannes herte, for they unsowen the semes of frendshipe in mannes herte For certes, unnethes may a man pleynly been accorded with him that hath him openly revyled and repreved in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outher he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as "mesel," "croked harlot," or by som sinne that he dooth. Now if he repreve him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the repreve to Jesu Crist, for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or maheym, or maladye And if he repreve him uncharitably of sinne, as, "thou holour," "thou dronkelewe harlot," and so forth, thanne aperteneth that to the rejoysinge of the devel, that evere hath joye that men doon sinne And certes, chydinge may nat come but out of a vileyns herte. For after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte And ye shul understonde that loke,

preveth, and eek of him that is repreved Lo, what seith seint Augustin. "ther is no-thing so lyk the

Let us now touch upon the vice of flattering,

Solomon says, "Flattery is worse than detraction "

like what he is not like They are like Judas who betrayed God, for these flatterers betray a man in order to sell him out to his enemy, that is, to the Devil Flatterers are the Devil's chaplains, that continually sing *Placebo* I reckon flattery among the vices of anger, for oftentimes, if one man be enraged at another, then will he flatter some other to gain an ally in his quarrel

tainly it is a great danger and a great sin

Let us now speak of chiding and reproaching,

sin, as Christ says in the gospel And note now that

painful evil, then the reproach is turned upon Jesus

bickering be a sinful thing as between all kinds of folk certainly it is most unsuitable between a man and his wife for there is never rest there Thereupon Solomon says A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike A man who is in a house the roof whereof leaks in many places though he avoid the dripping in one place it finds him in another and so fares he who has a chiding wife If she cannot scold him in one place she will scold him in another And therefore Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith says Solomon Saint Paul says Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as it is fit in the Lord Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them *Ad Colossenses tertio*

partakers with the Devil for they rejoice when the Devil wins and sorrow when he loses They are adversaries of Jesus Christ for they hate what He loves that is to say the salvation of souls

as the wise man says every false person living has within himself this peculiarity that he who would

nor of folk that love too much their own advantage nor of too worldly folk especially in the counselling of souls

Now comes the sin of those that sow discord amongst folk which is a sin that Christ utterly hates and no wonder For He died to establish concord on earth And more shame do they do to Christ than did those that crucified Him for God loves better that friendliness be among men than He loved His own body the which He gave for the sake of unity Therefore they are like the Devil who ever goes about to make discord

Now comes the sin of the double tongued such as speak fairly before folk and wickedly behind or they make a semblance of speaking with good intention, or in jest and play and yet they speak with evil intention

Now comes betraying of confidence whereby a man is defamed truly, the damage so done may scarcely be repaired

Now comes menacing which is an open folly for he that often menaces he often threatens more than he can perform

Now come idle words which sin is without profit to him that speaks and also to him that listens Or

develes child as he that ofte chydeth " Seint Paul

reste And therfore seith Salomon, "an hous that is uncovered and droppinge, and a chydinge wyf, been lyke " A man that is in a droppinge hous in

fore, "bettre is a morsel of breed with joye than an hous ful of delyces, with chydinge," seith Salomon Seint Paul seith "O ye wommen, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes as bihoveth in god, and ye men, loveth youre wyves " *Ad Colossenses, tertio*

43 Afterward speke we of scorninge, which is a wikked sinne, and namely, whan he scorneth a man for hise gode werkes For certes, swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florissheth Thise scorneres been parting felawes with the devel, for they han joye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth They been adversaries of Jesu Crist, for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule

44 Speke we now of wikked conseil, for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour For he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absol-*

self And men shul understonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folk, namely, in conseilinge of soules

45 Now comth the sinne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrely, and no wonder is For he deyde for to make concord And more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifyede,

46 Now comth the sinne of double tonge, swiche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihinde, or elles they maken semblant as though they speke of good entencioun, or elles in game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente

47 Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed, certes, unnethe may he restore the damage

Now comth manace, that is an open folye, for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth more than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is withouten profit of him that speketh tho wordes, and eek of

him that herkneth tho wordes Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelees, or with-outen entente of naturel profit. And al-be-it that ydel wordes been som tyme venial sinne, yet sholde men douten hem, for we shul yeve rekeninge of hem bifore god

else idle words are those that are needless, or without an aim toward any profit And although idle words are at times but a venial sin yet men should distrust them for we shall have to account for them before God

Now comes chattering which cannot occur without sin And as Solomon says It is a sin of manifest folly ' And therefore a philosopher said when men asked him how to please the people Do many good deeds and chatter but little

... this comth the sinne of japeres, that been the develes apes, for they maken folk to laughe at hir japerie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape Swiche japeres deffendeth seint Paul Loke how that vertuouse wordes and holy conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of japeris hem that travaillen in the service of the devel Thise been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of othere sinnes mo

After this comes the sin of jesters who are the ... words and tricks of jesters and jokers comfort those that travail in the service of the Devil These are the sins that come by way of the tongue and from anger and many other sins

Here followeth the Remedy against the Sin of Wrath

48 The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairetee, and eek another vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance

The remedy for anger is a virtue which men call mansuetude which is gentleness and even another virtue which men call patience or tolerance

49 Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by Ire Suffrance suffreth swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward Seint Jerome seith thus of debonairetee, that "it doth noon harm to no wight, ne seith, ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschaufeth nat agayns his resoun " This vertu som tyme comth of nature, for, as seith the philosophre, "a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and tretable to good nesse, but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace, thanne is it the more worth '

Gentleness withholds and restrains the stirrings and the urgings of man s impetuosity in his heart in such manner that it leaps not out in anger or in ire ... pher A man is a living thing by nature gentle and tractable to goodness but when gentleness is informed of grace then is it worth the more

50 Pacience, that is another remedye agayns Ire, is a vertu ...

... thou disconfiteth thyn enemy And therfore seith the wyse man, ' if thou wolt venquisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre " And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciences

Patience which is another remedy against anger ...

51 The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes, thilke suffrede Jesu Crist withouten grucching, ful paciently, whan the Jewes despysed and repreved him ful ofte Suffre thou therfore paciently; for the wyse man seith ' if thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe,

The f...

nevertheless thou shalt have no rest Another out

of patience

Upon a time a philosopher would have beaten a disciple for his great misdoing at which the philosopher had been much annoyed and he brought a rod wherewith to scourge the youth and when the youth saw the rod he said to his master What do you intend to do? I will beat you said the master for your correction Forsooth said the youth you ought first to correct yourself who have lost all your patience at the offence of a child Forsooth said the master weeping you say truth take the rod yourself my dear son and correct me for my impatience From patience comes obedience whereby a man becomes obedient to Christ and to all to whom he owes obedience in Christ And under

algate thou shalt have no reste " That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel Theragayns suffred Crist ful paciently whan he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but hise clothes The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body That suffred Crist ful paciently in al his passioun The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes Wherfore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet sinne Heer agayns suffred Crist ful paciently, and taughte us pacience whan he bar up on his blissed shulder the croys, up on which he sholde suffren despitous deeth Heer may men lerne to be pacient, for certes, noght only Cristen men been pacient for love of Jesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable but certes the olde payens that nevere were Cristene, commendeden and useden the vertu of pacience

52 A philosophre up on a tyme that wolde

maister, for thy correccion' For sothe, quod the child ye oghten first correcte youre self that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' 'For sothe,' quod the maister al wepinge, 'thou seyst sooth, have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correcte me for myn inpacience Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist And understond wel that obe

oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse

Here followeth Sloth

After the sins of envy and of anger now will I speak of the sin of acedia or sloth For envy blinds the heart of a man and anger troubles a man and acedia makes him heavy thoughtful and peevish Envy and anger cause bitterness of heart which bitterness is the mother of acedia and takes from a man the love of all goodness Then is acedia the anguish of a troubled heart and Saint Augustine says It is the sadness of goodness and the joy of evil Certainly this is a damnable sin for it wrongs Jesus

to every state of man for indeed the state of man is in three degrees One is the state of innocence as was the condition of Adam before he fell into sin in

53 After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I speken of the sinne of Accidie For Envye

seint Augustin seith. it is anoy of goodnesse and joye of harm' Certes, this is a dampnable sinne, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist, in as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist

to everich estaat of man, for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneres Outher it is th estaat of

innocence, as was th'estaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne, in which estaat he was holden to wirche, as in heryinge and adouringe of god Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to laboure in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wol graunte hem to arysen out of hir sinnes Another estaat is th'estaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence, and certes, to alle thise thinges is Accidie enemy and contrarie. For he loveth no bisinesse at al Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyflode of the body, for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporel necessitee, for it forsleweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by reccheleesnesse.

54 The fourthe thinge is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouthe and of hir hevinesse, for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke Of Accidie comth first, that a man is anoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that god hath abhominacion of swich Accidie, as seith seint Johan

55 Now comth Slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. For soothly, Slouthe is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, and therfore he shendeth al that he dooth. Agaynes this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouthe sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon, thinkinge that oure lord Jesu Crist quyteth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a greet thing; for it maketh, as seith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde sinwes; and Slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne comth drede to biginne to werke any gode werkes, for certes, he that is enclyned to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an empryse for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevouse and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith seint Gregorie.

56 Now comth wanhope, that is despeir of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede imagininge that he hath doon so much sinne, that

shewed wel by Judas Certes, aboven alle sinnes thanne is this sinne most displesant to Crist, and most adversarie Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward championn recreant, that seith creant withoute nede Allas! allas! nedeles is he

which state he was maintained to praise and adore his God Another state is the condition of sinful men wherein they are obliged to labour in praying to

loves no busyness at all Now certainly this foul sin of acedia is also a great enemy to the livelihood of the body, for it makes no provision for temporal necessity, for it wastes, and it allows things to spoil, and it destroys all worldly wealth by its carelessness

ates acedia,

will endure

to endure, that he dare not undertake any such works, as says Saint Gregory

Now enters despair, which is despair of the mercy of God, and comes sometimes of too extravagant sorrows and sometimes of too great fear for the victim imagines that he has done so much sin that it will

is always available to every penitent, and this is the greatest of all God's works Alas! Cannot a man bethink him of the gospel of Saint Luke, 15, wherein Christ says "Joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance " Behold further,

slumbering, which makes a man heavy and dull in body and in soul, and this sin comes from sloth And truly, the time that a man should not sleep, in all reason, is the early morning unless there be a reasonable necessity For verily the morningtide is most suitable for a man to say his prayers and to meditate

ters negligence, or carelessness that recks of nothing And if ignorance is the mother of all evil, certainly then negligence is the nurse Negligence cares not, when it must do a thing, whether it be well done or badly

As to the remedies for these two sins, as the wise man says 'He that fears God spares not to do that

among the harvest of men and they shall not be threshed with men," which is to say, in Purgatory Certainly, then, it appears that they shall be tormented by the Devil in Hell, unless they soon repent.

Then enters the sin that men call *tarditas*, which

recreant and nedeles despeired. Certes, the mercy of god is evere redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle his werkes. Allas! can nat a man bithinke him on the gospel of seint Luk, 15, where-as Crist seith that "as wel shal ther be joye in hevene upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as up-on nynety and nyne rightful men that neden no penitence?" Loke forther, in the same gospel, the joye and the feste of the gode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader Can they nat remembren hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk *xxiii° capitulo*, how that the theef that was hanged bisyde Jesu Crist, seyde "Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest in-to thy regne?" "For sothe," seyde Crist, "I seye to thee, to-day shaltow been with me in Paradys." Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have Thanne cometh Sompnolence, that is, sluggy slombringe, which maketh a man be hevy and dul, in body and in soule, and this sinne comth of Slouthe And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe, but-if ther were cause resonable. For soothly, the morwe-tyde is most covenable, a man to seye his preyeres, and for to thinken on god, and for to honoure god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist Lo! what seith Salomon "who-so wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde " Thanne cometh Necligence, or recchelesnesse, that rekketh of no-thing And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certes, Necligence is the norice Necligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely.

57. Of the remedie of thise two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that "he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon " And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plese god by his werkes, and abaundone him-self, with al

ordure Certes, the hevene is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk Eek David

but if they doon penitence.

58 Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen

that he thinketh that he shal live longe, but that hope faileth ful ofte

59 Thanne comth Lachesse, that is he, that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it and stinten, as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of him na-more kepe, anon as they finden any contrarie or any anoy Thise been the newe shepherdes, that leten hir sheep wilingly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. Of this comth poverte and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges Thanne comth a

in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devocioun, ne travaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. Thanne wexeth he slow and slombry, and sone wol be wrooth, and sone is enclyned to hate and to envye Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped

swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kinde.

ty or annoyance These are the modern shepherds

Saint Bernard says, and has such languor of soul,

The Remedy against the Sin of Sloth

60 Agayns this horrible sinne of Accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called

assautes of the devel. For it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as Accidie abateth it and maketh it feble. For this *Fortitudo* may endure by long suffraunce the travailles that been covenable

61 This vertu hath manye speces, and the firste is cleped Magnanimitee, that is to seyn, greet corage For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage agains Accidie, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevouse thinges, by hir owene wil, wysely and resonably And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man more by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, therfore men shal withstonden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplice the gode werkes in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue Thanne comth seuretee or sikernesse, and that is, whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne Thanne comth Magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne, and that is the ende why that men sholde

Against this horrible sin of acedia, and the branches thereof, there is a virtue that is called *fortitudo* or strength, that is, a force of character whereby a man

acedia reduces it and makes it feeble For this *fortitudo* can endure, by long suffering, the toils that are fitting

hard things, or grievous things, of their own initiative wisely and reasonably And for as much as the

His saints, to achieve and accomplish the good works in which one firmly purposes to continue Then comes

performs great works of goodness that he has begun; and that is the goal to reach which men should do good works, for in the doing of great good works lies the great reward Then there is constancy, that is,

Hell and of the joys of Heaven and in faith in the grace of the Holy Ghost that will give to a man the strength wherewith to perform his good purpose

do gode werkes, for in the acomplissinge of grete goode werkes lyth the grete guerdoun Thanne is ther Constaunce, that is, stablenesse of corage, and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the joyes of hevene, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente

Here followeth Avarice

After acedia I will speak of avarice and of covetousness of which sin Saint Paul says that The love of money is the root of all evil *ad Timotheum, sex*

And understand that avarice consists not only of greed for land and chattels but sometimes for learning and for glory and for every kind of immoderate thing And the difference between avarice and covetousness is this Covetousness is to covet such things as one has not and avarice is to keep and withhold

that vice for it does wrong to Jesus Christ For it takes away from Him the love that men owe to Him and turns it backward, and this against all reason, and it causes that an avaricious man has more hope in his chattels than in Jesus Christ and is more diligent in the guarding and keeping of his treasure than in the service of Jesus Christ And therefore Saint Paul says, *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that this ye know, that no covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God"

What difference is there between an idolater and an avaricious man, save that an idolater, peradventure, has but one idol and the avaricious man has many? For verily every florin in his coffer is his idol And certainly the sin of idolatry is the first thing that God forbids in the ten commandments, as witnesses *Exodi, capitulo XX°* 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image' Thus an avaricious man, who loves his treasure more than God, is an idolater, by reason of this cursed sin of avarice Of covetousness come these hard exactions whereunder men are assessed and made to pay taxes, rents, and payments in lieu of service, more than duty requires or reason demands Also, they take from their serfs amercements that might more reasonably be called extortions than amercements As to which amercements and fines of serfs, some lords' stewards say that it is

62 After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith seint Paule, that "the rote of alle harmes is Coveitise" *Ad Timotheum, sexto capitulo* For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it-self and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thinges

yeve to hem that han nede And understond, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Coveitise is this Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thinges as thou hast nat, and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, with-oute rightful nede Soothly, this Avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable, for al holy writ curseth it, and speketh agayns that vyce, for it dooth wrong to Jesu Crist For it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun, and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Jesu Crist, and dooth more observance in kepinge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Jesu Crist And therfore seith seint Paul *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that "an avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie"

64 What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his cofre is his mawmet And certes, the sinne of Mawmetrye is the firste thing that God deffended in the ten comaundments, as bereth witnesse *Exodi, capitulo xx°* "Thou shalt have no false goddes bifore me, ne thou shalt make to thee no grave

duetee or resoun is And eek they taken of hir bonde-men amerciments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorcions than amerciments Of whiche amerciments and raunsoninge of bonde-

men, somme lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful, for-as-muche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn But

nat lordes of thralles, but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinne And forther-over, ther-as the lawe seith, that temporel godes of bonde-folk been the godes of hir lordshipes, ye,

freendes, they been contubernial with the lord

66 Think eek, that of swich seed as cherles springeth, of swich seed springen lordes As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord Wherfore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plyt. Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wyse with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is, and skile it is, that men do hir devoir ther-as it is due, but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlinges is dampnable

67 And forther-over understond wel, that thise conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that been born of as royal blood as been they

doon extorcions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he sholde deffenden holy chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it, and who so

just, because a churl h
not belong to his lord, thing that does
these lordships do wron But certainly
serfs things that they ne y from their
de Civitate, libro nono T *Augustinus*
tion of serfdom is a sin Ge t the condi-

Thus may you see that ma

are the property of their lords, ver dmen
be understood, the property of the t is to
defends them in their rights, but who who
rob or to plunder them And thereupo ht to
"Thy prudence should cause thee to l eca
with thy slaves" Those whom you ca nly
are God's people, for humble folk a ris
friends, they are at home in the house of th t's

Think also, that such seed as churls co
from such seed come the lords As easily

Every sinful man is a serf to sin I advise you, ver
that you, lord, act in such wise with your serfs th
they shall rather love you than fear I know we
that there is degree above degree, and that this
reasonable, and reasonable it is that men should pa
their duty where it is due, but, certainly, extortion
and contempt for underlings is damnable

erted them to the faith they when t/from slavery And therefore, set thewes to his man that which the certain The pope calls himself servant man ood but in as much as the estate of then ght not have come into being of Hodvantage kept nor any peace and nor ton earth unless God had ordained rest should have higher rank and some that was sovereignty ordained to guard lowand defend its underlings or its sub andason and so far as lies in its power and jecy or to confound them Wherefore I noe lords that are like wolves that devour sa r the possessions of poor folk wrongfully tt rcy or measure they shall receive by the ure that they have used toward poor folk sy of Jesus Christ unless they mend their lw comes deceit between merchant and mer nd you shall understand that trade is of two the one is material and the other is spiritual ne is decent and lawful and the other is inde and unlawful Of this material trade that h is decent and lawful is this that where God ordained that a kingdom or a country is sufficient o itself then it is decent and lawful that of the undance of this country men should help another ountry that is more needy And therefore there re permitted to be merchants to bring from the one country to the other their merchandise That other trade which men barter with fraud and treachery and deceit with l es and with false oaths is accursed and damnable Spiritual trade is properly mony which is earnest desire to buy spiritual things that is to say things that appertain to the sanctuary of God and to the cure of the soul This desire if it

friends are of two kinds, as kindred and other friends Truly if they ask for one who is not worthy and

for wicked fleshly affection that they may have for that person and that is vile simony But certainly *in that service for which men give spiritual things* unto their servants it must be understood that the service is honest and also that it be done without bargaining and that the person be able For, as Saint Damasus says All the sins of the world compared to this sin are as naught ' For it is the greatest sin that may be done, after that of Lucifer and Antichrist For by this sin God loses the Church and

be served in his estaat and in his degree And therfore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom And therfore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord The Pope calleth himself servant of the servaunts of god, but for asmuche as the estaat of holy chirche ne mighte nat han be, ne the commune profit mighte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but if god hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower therfore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hir underlinges or hir subgets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power, and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde Wherfore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with outen mercy or mesure, they shul receyven by the same mesure that they han mesured to povre folk the mercy of Jesu Crist, but-if it be amended Now comth deceite bitwixe marchant and marchant And thow shalt understonde, that marchandyse is in two maneres, that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly That oon is honeste and leveful, and that other is deshoneste and unleveful Of thilke bodily marchandyse, that is leveful and honeste, is this, that, thereas god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to him self, thanne is it honeste and leveful, that of habundaunce of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedy And therfore, ther mote been marchants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyses That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false othes, is cursed and dampnable Espirituel marchandyse is proprely Symonye, that is, ententif desyr to byen thing espirituel, that is, thing that aperteneth to the seintuarie of god and to cure of the soule This desyr, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al be it that his desyr ne take noon effect, yet is it to him a deedly sinne, and if he be ordred, he is irreguler Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to the apostles And therfore understond, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituels, been cleped Symonials, be it by catel, be it by procuringe, or by fleshly preyere of his freendes, fleshly freendes, or espirituel freendes Fleshly, in two maneres, as by kinrede or othere freendes Soothly, if they praye for him that is nat worthy and able, it is Symonye *if he take the benefice, and if he be worthy* and able, ther nis noon That other manere is, whan a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccioun that they have un to the persone, and that is foul Symonye But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituels un to hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and

elles nat, and eek that it be with-outen bargaynynge, and that the persone be able For, as seith *seint Damasie*, "alle the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, arn as thing of noght", for it is *the gretteste* sinne that may be, after the sinne of Lucifer and Antecrist For, by this sinne, god *forleseth* the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven *chirches* to hem that been nat digne For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu

And therfore shul they

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tyme manslaughtre. Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been with-outen greet sinne whyles they haunte that craft Of avarice comen eek lesinges, thefte, fals witnesse, and false othes And ye shul understonde that thise been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the comaundements of god, as I have

or elles excusest thy-self falsly Ware yow, questemongeres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo The sinne of thefte is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. Corporel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighebores catel, in entente nevere to payen

chirche-hawes, for which every vileyns sinne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places Also, they that withdrawen falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche And pleynly and generally, sacrilege is to reven holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

the soul that He bought with His precious blood, because of those who give churches to those who are not worthy. For they put in thieves, who steal

in deed In word, as by taking away your neigh-

Beware, you jurymen and notaries! Certainly, by false witness, was Susanna in great sorrow and pain, as have been many others The sin of theft is also expressly against God's command, and that of two kinds corporal and spiritual Corporal as taking your neighbour's chattels against his will, be it by force or by fraud, be it by short lineal measure or by

of the fact that it is a holy place, as a church or a

The Relief against the Sin of Avarice

68 Now shul ye understonde, that the relevinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken

Now shall you understand that the relief for avarice is mercy and pity in large doses And men might

[1]An old game with three dice, in which that player wins the stakes who throws all three alike.

ask why mercy and pity relieve avarice Certainly, the avaricious man shows no pity nor any mercy to the needy man for he delights in keeping his treasure and not in the rescuing or relieving of his fellow Christian And *therefore will I speak first of mercy* Mercy as the philosopher says, is a virtue whereby the feelings of a man are moved by the trouble of him that is in trouble Upon which mercy follows pity and performs charitable works of mercy And certainly these things *impel a man to the mercy of* Jesus Christ—that He gave Himself for our sins and suffered death for the sake of mercy, and forgave us our original sins and thereby released us from the *pains of Hell and lessened the pains of Purgatory by* means of penitence and gives us grace to do good, and at the last gives us the bliss of Heaven The kinds of mercy are to lend and to give, and to forgive and to set free, and to have pity in heart and *compassion on the tribulations of one's fellow Christian* and also to chasten as need may be Another kind of remedy for avarice is reasonable largess, and truly here it behooves one to give consideration to *the grace of Jesus Christ and to one's temporal wealth*, and also to the perdurable wealth that Christ gave to us and to remember the death that he shall receive he knows not when where, or how, and also that he must forgo all that he has save only that which he has invested *in good works*

And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relevinge of Avarice? Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man, for he delyteth him in the kepinge of his tresor, *and nat in the rescowinge ne relevinge of* his evene-cristene. And therfore speke I first of misericorde Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philosophre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the misese of him that is missesed *Upon which misericorde folweth pitee*, in parfourninge of charitable werkes of misericorde. And certes, thise thinges moeven a man to misericorde of Jesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gilt, and suffred deeth *for misericorde*, and forgaf us oure originale sinnes, and therby relessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene The speces *of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yeve* and to foryeven and relesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his evene-cristene, and eek to chastyse there as nede is *Another manere of remedie agayns Avarice is* resonable largesse, but soothly, here bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Jesu Crist, and of hise temporel goodes, and eek of the godes perdurables that Crist yaf to us, and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon al that he hath, save only that he hath despended in gode werkes

But *for as much as some folk are immoderate, men* ought to avoid foolish largess, which men call waste Certainly he that is prodigal gives not his wealth, but loses his wealth Truly, that which he gives out of vainglory, as to minstrels and to followers, in order to have his renown carried about the world, he does sin thereby rather than gives alms Certainly, he shamefully loses his wealth who seeks in the gift *thereof nothing but sin He is like a horse that chooses* rather to drink muddy or turbid water than the clear water of a well And for as much as they give where they should not give, to them belongs that cursing which Christ will give at the day of doom to those that shall be damned

69. *But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable*, men oghten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast Certes, he that is fool-large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel Soothly, what *thing that he yeveth for veyne glorie*, as to minstrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon almesse. Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good no-thing but sinne. *He is lyk* to an hors that seketh rather to drinken drovy or trouble water than for to drinken water of the clere welle And for-as-muchel as they yeven ther as they sholde nat yeven, to hem aperteneth thilke *malisoun* that Crist shal yeven at the day of dome to hem that shullen been dampned.

Here followeth Gluttony

After avarice comes gluttony which also is entirely against the commandment of God Gluttony is immoderate appetite to eat or to drink, or else to yield to the immoderate desire to eat or to drink This sin *corrupted all this world as is well shown by the sin* of Adam and Eve Read also, what Saint Paul says of gluttony 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies *of the cross of Christ whose end is* destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame who mind earthly things " He that is addicted to this sin of gluttony may withstand no other sin *He may* even be in the service of all the vices, for it is in the Devil's treasure house

70 *After Avarice comth Glotonye, which is expres* eek agayn the comandement of god Glotonye is unmesurable appetyt to ete or to drinke, or elles to doon y-nogh to the unmesurable appetyt and *desordeynee coveityse to eten or to drinke*. This sinne corrumped al this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve Loke eek, what seith seint Paul of Glotonye. "Manye," seith seint Paul, "goon, *of whiche I have ofte seyd to yow, and now* I seye it wepinge, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist, of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hir wombe is hir god, and hir glorie *in confusioun of hem that so saveren erthely thinges* " He that is usaunt to this sinne of Glotonye, he ne may

no sinne withstonde He moot been in servage of alle vyces, for it is the develes hord ther he hydeth him and resteth. This sinne hath manye speces The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sep-

whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful manere of etinge The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred The fifthe is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drinkinge, for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even or on the night biforn

71 In other manere been distinct the speces of Glotonye, after seint Gregorie The firste is, for to ete biforn tyme to ete The seconde is, whan a man get him to delicat mete or drinke The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure The fourthe is curios

The Remedy against the Sin of Glutton

72 Agayns Glotonye is the remed e Abstinence, as seith Galien, but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body Seint Augustin wole, that Abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience

hevene

73 The felawes of Abstinence been Attemperaunce, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges eek Shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee Suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinkes, ne dooth no fors of to outrageous apparailinge of mete Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavee appetyt of etinge Sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke Sparinge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softely; wherfore som folk stonden of hir owene wil, to eten at the lasse leyser

Here followeth Lechery

74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie, for thise two sinnes been so ny cosins, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe God woot, this sinne is ful displesaunt thing to god, for he seyde himself, "do no lecherie" And therfore he putte grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe If womman thral were taken in this sinne, she sholde be beten with

that he hides himself and rests This sin has many species The first is drunkenness which is the hor

reason he drinks too much then though he be sud

gluttony is when a man devours his food and has no

times a man forgets before the morning what he did last evening or the night before

into sin

bliss of Heaven

she were a woman of quality, she should be slain with stones And if she were a bishop s daughter, she should be burnt, by God's commandment Furthermore, for the sin of lechery, God drowned all the world by the deluge And after that He burned five cities with thunderbolts and sank them into Hell

Let us speak, then, of that stinking sin of lechery that men call adultery of wedded folk, which is to say, if one of them be wedded, or both Saint John says that adulterers shall be in Hell "in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"—in the fire for the lechery, in brimstone for the stink of their filthiness Certainly, the breaking of this sacrament is a horrible thing, it was ordained by God Himself in Paradise, and confirmed by Jesus Christ, as witness Saint Matthew in the gospel "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh " This sacrament betokens the knitting together of Christ and of Holy Church And not only did God forbid

says in the gospel Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart " Here you may see that not only the doing of this sin is forbidden, but also the desire to do that sin This accursed sin grievously troubles those whom it haunts And first, it does harm to the soul for it constrains it to sin and to the pain of everlasting death Unto the body it is a trib-

substance This sin, as says the prophet, robs man and woman of good name and of all honour, and it gives great pleasure to the Devil, for thereby won he the greater part of the world And just as a merchant delights most in that trading whereof he reaps the greater gain, just so the Fiend delights in this filth

This is the Devil s other hand, with five fingers to catch the people into his slavery The first finger is

staves to the deeth And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she

leyt, and sank hem in-to helle

75 Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stinkinge sinne of Lecherie that men clepe Avoutrie of wedded folk, that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. Seint John seith, that avoutiers shullen been in helle in a stank brenninge of fyr and of brimston; in fyr, for the lecherie, in brimston, for the stink of hir ordure. Certes, the brekinge of this sacrement is an horrible thing, it was maked of god him-self in paradys, and confermed by Jesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew in the gospel "A man shal lete fader and moder, and taken him to his wyf, and they shullen be two in o flesh " This sacrement bitokneth the knittinge togidre of Crist and of holy churche And nat only that god forbad avoutrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf In this heeste, seith seint Augustin, is

in this ordure

76 This is that other hand of the devel, with fyve fingres, to cacche the peple to his vileinye The firste finger is the fool lookinge of the fool wom-

in wikkede manere, and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk him that handleth the scorpioun that stingeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his enveniminge, as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent his fingres The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte The fourthe finger is the kissinge; and trewely he were

a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovene or of a fourneys And more fooles been they that kissen in vileinye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle and namely, thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse, though they may nat do, and smatre hem Certes, they been lyk to houndes, for an hound, whan he comth by the roser or by othere busshes, though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenaunce to pisse And for that many man weneth that he may nat sinne, for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wyf, certes, that opinion is fals God woot, a man may sleen him self with his owene knyf, and make him selven dronken of his owene tonne Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth biforn god, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre Man sholde loven his wyf by dis-

in the wombe of a man, and with hise fyve fyngres of Lecherie he gripeth him by the reynes, for to throwen him in to the fourneys of helle, ther-as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepinge and wailinge, sharp hunger and thurst, and grimnesse of develes that shullen al to-trede hem, with outen respit and with-outen ende Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse speces, as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat maried, and this is deedly sinne and agayns nature Al that is enemy

mongers who will yet kiss though they cannot do anything, and so taste them Certainly they are like dogs for a dog when he passes a rosebush or other bushes though he cannot piss yet will he heave up his leg and make an appearance of pissing And as for the opinion of many that a man cannot sin for any

lechery he grips him by the loins in order to throw him into the furnace of Hell wherein he shall have the fire and the everlasting worms and weeping and wailing sharp hunger and thirst and horror of devils that shall trample all over him without respite and without end From lechery as I said spring divers branches as fornication which is between man

reason of a man tells him well that it is mortal sin since God forbade lechery And Saint Paul gives him over to that kingdom which is the reward of no man save those who do mortal sin Another sin of lechery is to bereave a maiden of her maidenhead for he that so does certainly he casts a maiden out of the highest state in this present life and he bereaves her of that precious fruit that the Book calls the hundred fruit I can say it in no other way in English but in Latin it is called *centesimus fructus* Certainly, he that so acts is the cause of many injuries and villainies more than any man can reckon just as he sometimes is cause of all damage that beasts do in the field who breaks down the hedge or the fence just so does the seducer destroy that which cannot be restored For truly, no more may a maidenhead be restored than an arm that has been smitten from the body may return thereto to grow again She may have mercy this I know well if she does penance, but it shall never again be that she is uncorrupted And though I have spoken somewhat of adultery it is well to show forth more dangers that come of adultery in order that men may eschew that foul sin Adultery in Latin means to approach another man s bed by reason of which those that once were one

Certainly this is the vilest thievery that can be when a

for these adulterers break into the temple of God spiritually and steal the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soul for which Christ will destroy

kept any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' Alas! All too little is such truth encountered nowadays The third evil is the filth whereby they break the commandment of God and defame the Author of matrimony, Who is Christ

out of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the heritage of good folk From this breaking it happens often times also, that people wed or sin with their own kindred, and specially the loose livers who haunt *the brothels of prostitutes, who may be likened to a* common privy wherein men purge themselves of their ordure What shall we say, also, of whoremasters who live by the horrible sin of prostitution, yea, sometimes by the prostitution of their own wives and children, as do pimps and procurers? Certainly these are accursed sins Understand also that adultery is fitly placed in the ten commandments between theft and homicide, for it is the greatest theft that can be, being theft of body and of soul And it is like homicide for it cuts in twain and breaks asunder those that were made one flesh, and therefore, by the old law of God, adulterers should be slain But nevertheless, by the law of Jesus Christ, which is a

who have entered orders, as a sub-deacon, or deacon priest, or hospitaller And ever the higher that he is in orders, the greater is the sin The thing that

whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothly Cristendom stant veyn and with-outen fruit This sinne is eek a thefte, for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certes, this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hir; and steleth hir soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the devel This is a fouler thefte, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice, for thise avoutiers breken the temple of god

hise thinges is out of my power, but only ye that been his wyf And how sholde I thanne do this wik-

andement of god, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoine, that is Crist For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrement of mariage is so noble and so digne,

fore wol *Crist putte hem out of the regne of hev-*

bitwixe thefte and manslaughtre, for it is the gretteste thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and of soule And it is lyk to homicyde, for it kerveth a-two and breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therfore, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn But nathelees, by the lawe of Jesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avoutrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wil of the Jewes, as was hir lawe "Go," quod Jesu Crist, "and have na-more wil to sinne", or, "wille namore to do sinne" Soothly, the vengeaunce of avoutrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so

or preest, or hospitaliers And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the sinne The thinges that gretly agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they receyved the ordre And forther-over, sooth is, that holy ordre is chief of al the tresorie of god, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee, to shewe that they been joyned to chastitee, which that is most precious lyf that is And thise ordred folk been specially tytled to god, and of the special meynee of god, for which, whan they doon deedly sinne, they been the special traytours of god and of his peple, for they liven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and whyle they been suche traitours, hir preyers availen nat to the peple Preestes been aungeles, as by the dignitee of hir misterye, but for sothe, seint Paul seith, that "Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light" Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he

book of Kinges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel Belial is to seyn "with-outen juge", and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no juge, na-more than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that him lyketh in the toun So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is y nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree Thise preestes, as seith the book, ne conne nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat, they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the

hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw

and preye for Cristene soules And therfore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court

the sinne of lecherie, this sinne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinrede And certes,

and to His people, for they live on the people in order to pray for the people, and while they are such

Belial means, "without judge", and so fare they, they think they are free and have no judge any more than has a free bull that takes whatever cow pleases him on the farm So act they with women For just as a free bull is enough for all a farm, just so is a

flesh that was raw Certainly, so these scoundrels hold themselves not pleased with roasted flesh and boiled flesh, with which the people feed them in great reverence, but they will have the raw flesh of

that should worship Christ and Holy Church and pray for Christian souls And therefore such priests and their lemans also who give assent to their lechery, have the cursing of all the Christian court until they mend their ways The third kind of adultery is sometimes practised between a man and his wife, and that is when they have no regard to their union save only for their fleshly delight, as says Saint Jerome, and care for nothing but that they are come together, because they are married it is all well enough, as they think But over such folk the Devil has power, as said the Angel Raphael to Tobias, for in their union they put Jesus Christ out of mind and give themselves to all filthiness The fourth kind is the

no heed to relationship And certainly, kinship is of two kinds either spiritual or carnal, spiritual, as

and women do with d vers intent ons and in divers manners but though holy writ speaks of such hor rible sin holy writ cannot be defiled any more than can the sun that sh nes upon the dunghill Another form of sin appertains to lechery and that comes often to those who are virgin and also to those who are corrupt and this sin men call pollut on which comes in four ways Sometimes it is due to laxness of the body because the humours are too rank and abundant in the body of man Sometimes it is due to *infirmity because of the weakness of the retentive* virtue as is d scussed in works on medicine Some t mes it is due to a surfeit of food and drink And sometim s it comes from base thoughts that were enclosed in man s mind when he fell asleep which *thing may not happen without sin Because of this* men must govern themselves wisely or else they may fall into grievous sin

For which a womman may in no lasse sinne assemblen with hir godsib than with hir owene fleshly brother The fifthe spece is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne wryte, nathelees it is openly reherced in holy writ This cursednesse doon men and wommen in diverse entente and in diverse manere, but though that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes, holy writ may nat been defouled, na more than the sonne that shyneth on the mixen Another sinne apertenenth to lecherie, that comth in slepinge and this sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt and this sinne men clepen pollucioun that comth in foure maneres Somtyme, of languissinge of body, for the humours *been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man* Somtyme of infermetee for the feblesse of the vertu retentif as phisik maketh mencioun Somtyme, for surfeet of mete and drinke And somtyme of vileyns thoghtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe which may nat been with oute sinne For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful grevously

The Remedy against the Sin of Lechery

sin And this s of two kinds that is to say chast ty in marriage and chastity in w do vhood Now you shall understand that matr mony is the permitted coming together of man and of woman who receive by virtue of the sacrament the bond of union from

one man as Saint Augustine says and that for many reasons

First because marriage figures the un on between Christ and Holy Church And another is because the man is the head of the woman at any rate it has been so ordained by ordinance For if a woman had

77 Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Continence that restreyneth alle the desordeynee moevinges that comen of fleshly talentes And evere the gretter merite shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne And this

disciples Trewe effect of mariage clenseth fornicacioun and *replenisseth holy chirche of good linage*, for that is the ende of mariage, and it chaungeth deedly sinne in to venial sinne bitwixe hem that

by manye resouns

sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god, and eek a womman ne mighte nat plese to many folk at ones And also ther

whan he made first womman. For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe For ther as the womman hath the maistrie, she maketh to muche desray, ther neden none ensamples of this The experience of day by day oghte suffyse Also certes, god ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe, for she can nat paciently

en his wyf as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it" So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede

80 Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hir housbonde, that telleth seint Peter First, in obedience And eek as seith the decree, a womman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witnesse with-oute leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord, algate, he sholde be so by resoun She sholde eek serven him in alle honestee, and been attempree of hir array I wot

more men than one then should she have more heads than one and that were a horrible thing before God and also a woman could not please too many folk at once And also there should never be peace or rest

were joined with many men

Now comes the question How should a man conduct himself toward his wife? and specifically in two things that is to say in tolerance and reverence as Christ showed when He first made woman For He made her not of the head of Adam because she should not claim to exercise great lordship For wherever the woman has the mastery she causes too much disorder there are needed no instances of this The experience of every day ought to suffice Also certainly God did not make woman of the foot of Adam because she should not be held in too great contempt for she cannot patiently endure but God made woman of the rib of Adam because woman should be a companion to man Man should conduct himself toward his wife in faith in truth and in love as Saint Paul says Husbands love your wives even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it So should a man give himself for his wife if there be need

Now how a woman should be subject to her husband that is told by Saint Peter First by obedience And also as says the law a woman who is a wife as

should resolve to please their husbands but not by the finery of their array Saint Jerome says that wives who go apparelled in silk and in precious purple cannot clothe themselves in Jesus Christ Also what says Saint John on this subject? Saint Gregory also says that a person seeks precious array only out of

mony Another is to pay each of them to the other the debt of their bodies for neither of them has power over his own body The third is to avoid lechery and baseness The fourth is indeed deadly sin As for the first, it is meritorious the second also,

of these unions may be without venial sin, because of the original sin and because of the pleasure. As to the fourth, be it understood that if they couple only for amorous love and for none of the aforesaid reasons, but merely to accomplish that burning pleasure, no matter how often, truly it is a mortal sin, and yet (with sorrow I say it) some folk are at pains to do it more and oftener than their appetite really demands.

The second kind of chastity is to be a clean widow and eschew the embraces of man and desire the embrace of Jesus Christ. These are those that have been wives and have lost their husbands, and also women that have fornicated and have been relieved by penitence. And truly, if a wife could keep herself

box of the blessed Magdalen, which fills Holy Church with good odour. The third kind of chastity is virginity, and it behooves her to be holy in heart

Christ, and virgin was He Himself.

Another remedy for lechery is, specially to withhold oneself from such things as give rise to this baseness, *as ease, and eating and drinking; for certainly,* when the pot boils furiously, the best measure is to withdraw it from the fire. Sleeping long in great security from disturbance is also a nurse to lechery.

Another remedy for lechery is, that a man or woman eschew the company of those by whom he

Samson and holier than David and wiser than Solomon.

Now, since I have expounded to you, as best I

to God that they have been touched upon in this treatise, each of them all.

sothe deedly sinne. As to the firste, it is meritorie; the seconde also, for, as seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitee that yeldeth to hir housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of hir herte. The thridde manere is venial sinne, and trewely scarsly may ther any of thise be with-oute venial sinne, for the corrupcion and for the delyt. The fourthe manere is for to understonde, if they assemble only for amorous love and for noon of the forseyde causes, but for to accomplice thilke brenninge delyt, they rekke nevere how ofte, sothly it is deedly sinne, and yet, with sorwe, somme folk wol peynen hem more to doon than to hir appetyt suffyseth.

81. The seconde manere of chastitee is for to been a clene widewe, and eschue the embracinges of man, and desyren the embracinge of Jesu Crist. Thise been tho that han been wyves and han forgoon hir housbondes, and eek wommen that han doon lecherie and been releeved by Penitence. And certes, if that a wyf coude kepen hir al chaast by licence of hir housbonde, so that she yeve nevere noon occasion that he agilte, it were to hire a greet

inge, in spekinge, and in dede. They been the vessel or the boyste of the blissed Magdalene, that fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. The thridde manere of chastitee is virginitee, and it bihoveth that she be holy in herte and clene of

Virginitee baar oure lord Jesu Crist, and virgine was him-selve.

82. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, specially to withdrawen swiche thinges as yeve occasion *to thilke vileinye, as ese, etinge and drinkinge; for* certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr. Slepinge longe in greet quiete is eek a greet norice to Lecherie.

83. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, that a man or a womman eschue the companye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted; for al-be it so

truste in his owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and holier than David, and wyser than Salomon.

84. Now after that I have declared yow, as I can, the sevene deedly sinnes, and somme of hir braunches

Of Confession

85 Now for-as muche as the second partie of Penitence stant in Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Augustin seith. sinne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveiten agayn the lawe of Jesu Crist, and this is for to sinne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by thy fyve wittes, that been sighte, heringe, smellinge, tastinge or savouringe, and felinge Now is it good to understonde that that agreggeth muchel every sinne Thou shalt considere what thou art that doost the sinne, whether thou be male or femele, yong or old, gentil or thral, free or servant, hool or syk, wedded or sengle, ordred or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculer, if she be of thy kinrede, bodily or goostly, or noon, if any of thy kinrede have sinned with hir or noon, and manye mo thinges

86 Another circumstaunce is this, whether it be doon ... for-

wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the devel of helle Wher fore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampnacioun of the sinner The fifthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how ofte that he hath falle For he that ofte falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of god, and encreesseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist, and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, and the latter aryseth, and is the more eschew for to shryven h...

or not whether any of your kindred has sinned with her or not and many other things

Another circumstance is this whether it be done

place where you have done the sin whether in other men s houses or your own in field or in church or churchyard in a dedicated church or not For if

cumstance is what go betweens or what messengers,

of Hell Wherefore those that egg on to or connive for the sin are partners in the sin and shall partake of the damnation of the sinner The fifth circum

by way of what sort of temptation and whether he himself procured that temptation or whether it came by the incitement of other folk or whether he sin by forcing a woman or by her consent or, if the sinner be a woman despite all her efforts were she forced or not —this shall she tell and whether for greed of gain or for stress of poverty and whether it was of her own procuring or not, and all such

trappings The seventh circumstance is, in what manner he has done his sin or how she has suffered men to do it unto her And the same shall the man tell fully, with all the circumstances, and whether he has sinned with common brothel women, or not, or has done his sin in holy times, or not, in fasting times, or not, or before confession or after his last shriving, and whether he has, peradventure, broken therefor his enjoined penance, by whose help and by whose counsel, by sorcery or cunning all must be told All these things according as they are great or small burden the conscience of a man And too, that the priest who is your judge shall be the better advised to his judgment in giving you penance, that is, according to your contrition For understand well that after a man has defiled his baptism by sin, if he would gain salvation, there is no other way than by penitence and shrift and penance, and specifically by the two if there be a confessor to shrive him, and by the third if he live to perform it

Then shall a man reflect and consider that if he will make a true and profitable confession, there must be four conditions First, it must be in sorrowful bitterness of heart, as said King Hezekiah to God 'I will remember all the days of my life in bitterness of heart " This condition of bitterness has five signs. The first is that confession must be shamefaced, not to cover up nor to hide sin, for the sinner has offended his God and defiled his soul And thereof

for which shamefacedness he received straightway the mercy of God And thereof says Saint Augustine that such shamefaced folk are to forgiveness and re

that sits in God's place Since Christ is sovereign and the priest is means and mediator between Christ

infirmity under it For he shall care not who sits there, but only in whose place he sits A man who has offended a lord, and who comes to ask mercy and to be at peace again, and who should sit down at once by the lord s side—men would hold him to be

or noon, and swiche manere harneys The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his sinne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hir And the same shal the man telle pleynly, with alle circumstaunces, and whether he hath sinned with comune bordel-wommen, or noon, or doon his sinne in holy tymes, or noon, in fasting-tymes, or noon, or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte, and hath, peraventure, broken therfore his penance enjoyned, by whos help and whos conseil, by sorcerie or craft, al moste be told Alle thise thinges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the conscience of man And eek the preest that is thy juge, may the bettre been avysed of his jugement in yevinge of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun For understond wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by sinne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence and shrifte and satisfaccioun, and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shryven him, and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it

This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes.

of his sinne", and for he hath greet shamefastnesse,

itee in confessioun, of which seith seint Peter, "Humbleth yow under the might of god " The hond

and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat him wepe in herte Swich was the confessioun of seint Peter, for after that he hadde forsake Jesu Crist, he wente out and weep ful bitterly The fourthe

signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the

haste him to his deeth, and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to hele And right so fareth sinne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes, as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place, and eek the drecchinge of o synne draweth in another, and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro Crist And if he abyde to his laste day, scarsly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenten him, for the grevous maladie of his deeth And for as muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Jesu Crist, whanne he

pryde, or of envye, and so forth of the speces and circumstances, and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse of hise sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne, and eek that he be contrit of hise sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, nevere eft to falle in sinne, and eek that he drede and countrewaite him self, that he flee the occasiouns of sinne to whiche he is enclyned. Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy sinnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another, that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede, for it nis but stranglinge of thy soule For certes, Jesu Crist is entierly al good, in him nis noon imperfeccioun, and therfore outher he foryeveth al parfitly or never a deel I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein

by lycence of thy curat, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy sinnes But lat no

for after he had forsaken Jesus Christ he went out and wept full bitterly The fourth sign is when the sinner forgoes not for shame to make his confession Such was the confession of the Magdalen who did not spare for any shame before those who were at the feast, to go to Our Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledge to Him her sins The fifth sign is that a man or woman shall obediently receive the penance that is imposed for the sins for certainly, Jesus Christ, for the sins of a man was obedient unto death

and also the wound would be but the harder to heal And it is even so with sin that is long carried in a man unconfessed Certainly a man ought to confess his sins without delay for many reasons as for fear of death which often comes suddenly and whereof no man can ever be certain when it will come or in

then remember his sins or repent of them because of the grievous malady about to cause his death And for as much as he has not in his life hearkened unto Jesus Christ when He has spoken he shall cry to Jesus Christ at the last and scarcely will He hear him And understand that this condition must have four elements Your shrift must be considered in advance and well advised upon for wicked haste gives no profit and that a man shall be able to make confession of all of his sins be they of pride or of envy and so

and some to another when it is to be understood

to the director for a certain sin you are bound to show unto him all the rest of your sins whereof you have been shriven by your own curate save and

done since last you were shriven, and then this will be no wicked intention to divide confession

admonishing him to leave sin Another condition is that your shrift be lawful, that is to say, that you, who shrive yourself, and also the priest who hears your confession be verily of the faith of Holy Church, and that a man be not deprived of hope of the mercy

himself and his own malice for his sin, and not an other, nevertheless, if another man be the occasion for or enticer to his sin, or the state of a person be such that because of that person the sin is aggravated, or else if he cannot fully shrive himself without telling of the person with whom he has sinned, then he may tell, so that the intention be not to backbite such a person, but only to declare fully the confession

Also you shall tell *no lies* in your confession, as to seem humble perchance in saying that you have done sins whereof you were never guilty For Saint Augustine says if thou, by reason of thy humility, liest against thyself though thou wast not in sin before, yet art thou then in sin because of thy lying You must also confess your sin with your own mouth, unless you grow dumb, and not by letter, for you have done the sin and you shall have the shame thereof Also, you shall not embellish your confession with fair and subtle words, the more to cover

ten, then you rise by confession And t'
shrive yourself more than once of sin for
have been already shriven, it is the more r
as Saint Augustine says, you shall thereb
easily obtain release from and the grac

blotte be bihinde, lat no sinne been untold, as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou shalt be shriven to thy curat, telle him eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last y-shriven; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte.

89 Also the verray shrifte axeth certeine condiciouns First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, noght constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thinges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confesse his trespas, and that noon other man telle his sinne but he him-self, ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his sinne, ne wratthe him agayn the preest for his amonestinge to leve sinne. The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be laweful, that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verraily in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Jesu Crist, as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accusen him-self of his owene trespas, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene

most eek shewe thy sinne by thyn owene propre

nat the preest, thou most tellen it pleynly, be it

to tellen him

HERE FOLLOWETH THE THIRD PART OF SATISFACTION

91 Now have I told you of verray Confessioun, that is the seconde partie of Penitence

The thridde partie of Penitence is Satisfaccioun, and that stant most generally in almesse and in bodily peyne Now been ther three manere of almesses, contricion of herte, where a man offreth himself to god another is, to han pitee of defaute of hise neighebores, and the thridde is, in yevinge of good conseil goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenaunce of mannes fode And tak keep, that a man hath need of thise thinges gen-

thise werkes shaltow heren at the day of dome

92 Thise almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou mayst, but nathelees, if thou mayst nat doon it

may nat been hid that is set on a montayne, ne men lighte nat a lanterne and put it under a busshel, but

eth eek venial sinne, and therfore it aperteneth specially to penitence.

Now have I told you of true confession which is the second part of penitence The third part of pen

on the weaknesses of one s neighbours and the third

givings or works of charity by those who have temporal riches or discretion in counselling Of these works you shall hear at the day of doom

These alms-doings shall you do with your own proper things and without delay and privately, if you can but nevertheless if you cannot do it privately you shall not forbear to do such works though men may see you so long as they be done not for the world s approbation but for the pleasing of Jesus Christ For take witness of Saint Matthew *capitulo quinto* A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick and it giveth light unto all that are in the house Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven '

the removal of evils and to obtain things spiritual and durable as well as temporal things sometimes of which orisons truly in the prayer of the pater noster has Christ included most things Certainly it is invested with three things pertaining to His dignity wherefore it is more dignified than any other prayer Jesus Christ made it Himself and it is short so that it may be learned the more easily and be held the more easily in the heart of memory that man may the oftener help himself by repeating the

it comprises within itself all good prayers The expounding of this holy prayer I commit to these masters of theology save that thus much will I say that when you pray that God forgive your

This prayer must be truly said and in utter faith, in order that men may pray to God ordinately and discreetly and devoutly, and always a man shall sub

charity It is of avail also even against the vices of the soul, for, as Saint Jerome says, "By fasting we are saved from the vices of the flesh, and by prayer from the vices of the soul"

After the foregoing you shall understand that bodily pain lies in vigils, for Jesus Christ says, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation ' You shall understand, also, that fasting stands in three things, in the forgoing of material food and drink, and in forgoing worldly pleasures, and in forgoing the doing of mortal sin, this is to say that a man shall *guard himself from deadly sin with all his might*

And you shall understand, also, that God ordained

season nor sit and eat longer at his table because he has fasted

Then you shall understand that bodily pain lies in

make your heart bitter or angry or vexed with yourself for it is better to cast away your hair shirt

of hair shirts or habergeons or hauberks

Then, discipline lies also in beating of the breast, in scourging with rods, in kneelings, in tribulations, in suffering patiently the wrongs that are done unto one, and also in patient endurance of illnesses, or losing of worldly chattels, or of wife or of child or oth*er friends*

Then shall you understand which things hinder penance, and these are four, that is to say, fear, shame, hope, and despair And to speak first of fear, since a man sometimes thinks that he cannot endure penance, against this thought may be set, as remedy, the thought that such bodily penance is short and mild compared with the pain of Hell, which is so cruel and so long that it lasts for ever

94 This preyere moste be trewely seyd and in verray feith, and that men preye to god ordinatly

with al his might

96 And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordeyned fastinge; and to fastinge appertenen foure thinges Largenesse to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne anoyed, ne grucche for he fasteth, and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure, that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth.

97. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily

or of child, or othere freendes

99 Thanne shaltow understonde, whiche thinges

with-outen ende

been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns A man sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and woot alle hise thoghtes and alle hise werkes, to him may no thing been hid ne covered Men sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that been nat penitent and shriven in this present lyf For alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world

101 Now for to speken of the hope of hem that been necligent and slowe to shryven hem, that stant [illegible]

[illegible] in Cristes mercy Agayns the firste vyce, he shal thinke, that oure lyf is in no sikernesse, and eek that alle the richesses in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal And, as seith seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god, that nevere shal the peyne stinte of hem that nevere wolde withdrawen hem fro sinne, hir thankes but ay continue in sinne, for thilke perpetuel wil to do sinne shul they han perpetuel peyne

102 Wanhope is in two maneres the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist, that other is that they thinken, that they ne mighte nat longe persevere in goodnesse The firste wanhope comth of that he demeth that he hath sinned so greetly and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne that he shal nat be saved Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thinke that the [illegible]

[illegible] tence And thogh he never so longe have leyn in sinne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven him to [illegible]

[illegible] him list.

103 Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penaunce, and, after the word of Jesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevene, ther joye hath no contrarioustee of wo ne grevaunce, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf, ther as is the sikernesse fro the peyne of helle, ther as is the blisful companye that rejoysen hem everemo, everich of otheres joye, ther as the body of man, that [illegible]

do foul things certainly he ought not to be ashamed to do fair things and of such is confession A man should also think that God sees and knows all his thoughts and all his deeds from Him nothing may be hidden nor covered Men should even bear in mind the shame that is to come at the day of judgment to those who are not penitent and shriven in this present life For all the creatures on earth and in Hell shall openly behold all that sinners hide in this world

Now to speak of the hope of those who are negl [illegible]

[illegible] themselves willingly from sin but have always continued in sin because for the perpetual will to sin they shall have perpetual torment

Despair is of two sorts the first is of the mercy of Christ the other is the thought of sinners that they cannot long persevere in goodness The first despair [illegible]

[illegible] bind Against the second despair let him think that as often as he falls he may rise again by penitence And though he may have lain in sin ever so long the mercy of Christ is ever ready to receive him into [illegible]

Then shall men understand what is the fruit of penance and according to the word of Jesus Christ, it is the endless bliss of Heaven where joy has no opposite of woe or grievance where all evils of this present life are past wherein is security from the torments of Hell wherein is the blessed company that rejoices evermore each of the others joy wherein the body of man that formerly was foul and dark is more bright than the sun wherein the body that

glory of humbleness and the plenitude of joy by hunger and thirst and the ease and rest by labour and life by death and the mortification of sin

by poverte espiritual, and the glorie by lowenesse, the plentee of joye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille, and the lyf by deeth and mortificacion of sinne

L'Envoi

Now do I pray all those who hear this little treatise or read it that if there be within it anything that pleases them they thank Our Lord Jesus Christ from Whom proceeds all understanding and all goodness And if there be anything that displeases them I pray them also that they impute it to the fault of my ignorance and not to my intention which would fain have better said if I had had the knowledge For our Book says All that is written is written for our instruction and that was my intention Wherefore I meekly beseech you that for the sake of God's mercy you pray for me that Christ have mercy upon me and forgive me my trespasses—and especially for my translations and the writing of worldly vanities the which I withdraw in my retractations as The Book of Troilus also The Book of Fame The Book of the Nineteen Ladies The Book of the Duchess The Book of Saint Valentine's Day Of the Parliament of Birds The Tales of Canterbury those that tend toward sin The Book of the Lion and many another book were they in my remembrance

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homilies and of morality and devotion—for those I thank Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother and all the saints of Heaven beseeching them that they henceforth unto my life's end send me grace whereof to bewail my sins and to study for the salvation of my soul —and grant me the grace of true penitence confession and expiation in this present life through the benign grace of Him Who is King of kings and Priest over all priests Who redeemed us with the precious blood of His heart so that I may be one of those at the day of doom that shall be saved *Qui cum patre etc*

104 Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretis or rede, that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem, that ther of they thanken oure lord Jesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse And if ther be any thing that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unconninge, and nat to my wil that wolde ful fayn have seyd bettre if I hadde had conninge For oure boke seith, "al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine", and that is myn entente Wherfore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes —and namely, of my translacions and endytinges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns as is the book of Troilus, The book also of Fame, The book of the nynetene Ladies, The book of the Duchesse The book of seint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes, The tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sounen in to sinne, The book of the Leoun, and many another book, if they were in my remembrance and many a song and many a lecherous lay, that Crist for his grete mercy foryeve me the sinne But of the translacion of Boece de Consolacione, and othere bokes of Legendes of seintes and omelies, and moralitee, and devocioun, that thanke I oure lord Jesu Crist and his blisful moder, and alle the seintes of hevene, bisekinge hem that they from hennesforth, un to my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes, and to studie to the salvacioun of my soule —and graunte me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to doon in this present lyf, thurgh the benigne grace of him that is king of kinges and preest over alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte, so that I may been oon of hem at the day of dome that shulle be saved *Qui cum patre, &c*

HERE IS ENDED THE BOOK OF THE TALES OF CANTERBURY, COMPILED BY GEOFFREY CHAUCER, ON WHOSE SOUL JESUS CHRIST HAVE MERCY

AMEN

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